Texas Outlaw Press
2023

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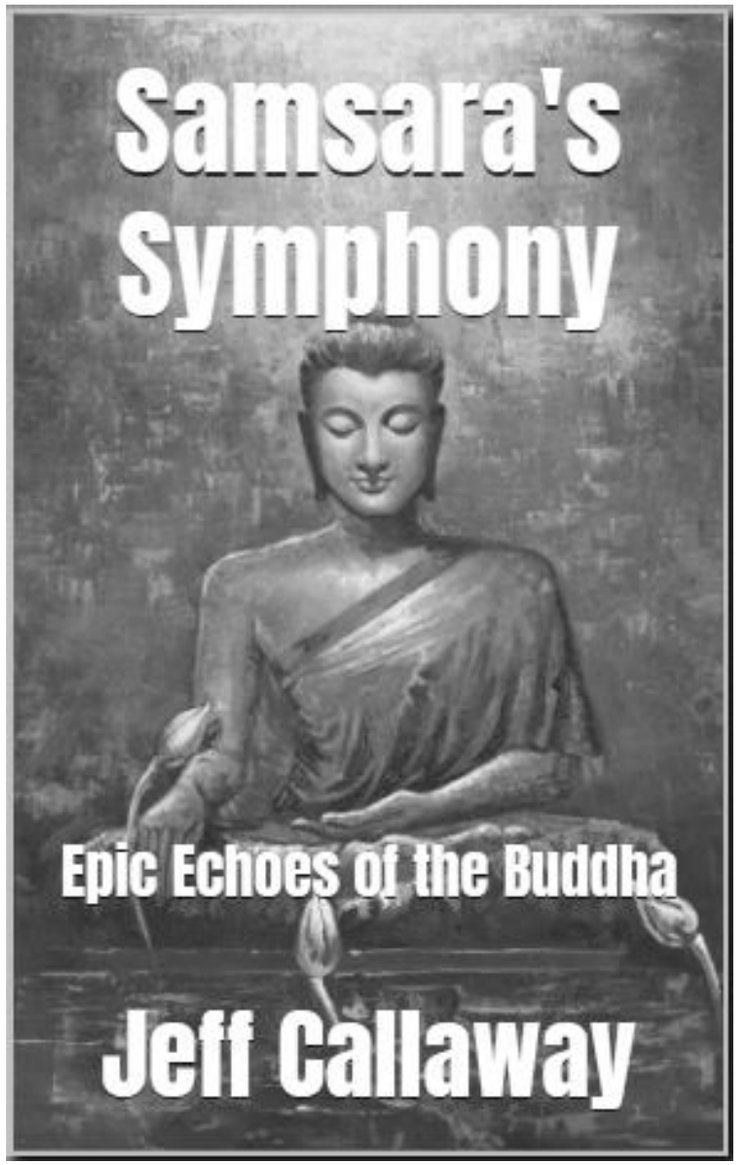
TEXAS OUTLAW POET
https://www.amazon.com/author/texasoutlawpoet


Samsara's
Symphony
Epic Echoes of the Buddha
Jeff Callaway

SAMSARA'S SYMPHONY
Epic Echoes of the Buddha

By Jeff Callaway

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Foreword

Dear Reader,

Welcome to the captivating journey that awaits you in the pages of "Samsara's Symphony: Epic Echoes of the Buddha." As you embark upon this literary odyssey, prepare to witness the life of the Buddha unfold in the grand tapestry of narrative epic poetry, a homage to the immortal works of literary giants like Dante and Percy Shelley. Within these verses, the essence of the Buddha's profound journey is encapsulated, painted with vivid strokes of language, emotion, and spirituality.

This poetic endeavor was born out of a profound exploration into the realms of Buddhism, a journey that spanned many years of dedicated study and contemplation. As a humble seeker, I delved into the teachings, stories, and intricacies of the Buddha's life, gradually crafting verses that would weave together into a symphony of epic proportions. In each carefully chosen word, in every meticulously crafted stanza, my intention was to illuminate the path of enlightenment, capturing the spirit of the Buddha's transformative odyssey.

The decision to recount the Buddha's life through the lens of narrative epic poetry was not arbitrary. Instead, it emerged from a desire to transcend mere storytelling and create a literary experience that mirrored the profound depth of the Buddha's teachings. The epic form, with its rhythmic cadence and lyrical resonance, seemed a fitting vessel to

carry the weight of the Buddha's narrative, infusing it with a timeless quality that echoes through the ages.

In these pages, you will not find a mere retelling of historical events; rather, you will encounter a poetic reimagining, a journey into the heart of the Buddha's struggles, triumphs, and the profound wisdom he bestowed upon the world. Each quatrain is a brushstroke, carefully placed to create a vivid portrait of the man who became the enlightened one, the Buddha. It is an invitation to step into the shoes of Siddhartha Gautama, to witness the world through his eyes and feel the reverberations of his awakening.

As you traverse the verses, you will witness the young prince's departure from the palace walls, the aching reality of human suffering that stirred the depths of his soul, and the relentless pursuit of truth that led him to the Bodhi tree. The epic unfolds the cosmic battle within Siddhartha, the confrontation with Mara, and the triumphant emergence as the awakened one, the Buddha.

The modern-day bard welcomes you into a world where language transcends its utilitarian form, reaching for the sublime. It is my sincerest hope that these verses resonate with you, that they evoke contemplation and introspection, much like the teachings of the Buddha themselves. Through the symphony of words, I aim to transport you to ancient times, to a sacred grove where enlightenment was realized and a compassionate philosophy was born.

To all fellow seekers and lovers of literature, I extend an open invitation to delve into "Samsara's Symphony." May these verses serve as a bridge between past and present, inviting you to explore the timeless wisdom that emanates from the life of the Buddha. As you embark on this poetic pilgrimage, may you find echoes of the eternal truths that have resonated through the ages, carried forth on the wings of a contemporary bard's poetic expression.

With deep reverence for the journey of Siddhartha Gautama and an earnest hope that these verses illuminate the path of awakening, I invite you to immerse yourself in the profound cadence of "Samsara's Symphony: Epic Echoes of the Buddha." May it be a source of inspiration, contemplation, and a celebration of the enduring human quest for truth and enlightenment.

-Jeff Callaway

Part One:

1. Queen Maha Maya's Dream

In epochs yore, Suddhodana did reign,
A monarch mighty, bearing royal strain.
To Maha Maya's grace, his heart inclined,
Koliyan princess, beauty so refined.

They ruled o'er Sakyas, warriors bold,
In northern India, tales of old.
Near Koliya tribe, their kingdom stood,
'Midst Himalayan foothills, Kapilavastu brood.

A tale unfolds in ancient Nepal's domain,
Sakyas' capital, Kapilavastu's name.
Warriors thrived, their glory unfurled,
In this epic land, an age-old world.

From Koliyan realm, fair Maha Maya sprung,
Anjana's royal blood in her veins sung.
"Maya," they named her, vision pure and
bright,
Her virtues, a beacon, in wisdom's light.

Blessed with intellect and piety's grace,
Her talents, divine, in life's sacred space.
Suddhodana, a monarch just and true,
"King of the Law," his reign in virtue grew.

Respected by courtiers, nobles in awe,
His rule upheld justice, without a flaw.
In the land of Sakyas, honor bestowed,
A noble lineage, where destinies flowed.

Beneath the moon's full glow, in regal keep,
The queen, in slumber, plunged in visions
deep.
Four devas, spirits swift in ethereal flight,
To Anotatta's lake, in Himalayan height.

Bathing her in waters pure and divine,
Clothed in heavenly garb, a radiant sign.
Perfumes anointed, flowers adorned,
A celestial message in dreams was formed.

A white elephant, majestic and grand,
Holding a lotus, a symbol in hand.
Three times around her, a mystic ballet,
Through her right side, it chose its way.

Awakening, she sensed destiny's thread,
A message profound, by dreams it spread.
The king, confounded, sought wisdom's gleam,
Wise men summoned to fathom the dream.

Wise men declared, "O Majesty, rejoice!
The devas' favor, a celestial voice.
Your queen, chosen as mother divine,
A Purest-One, in her womb, will shine."

Joy enveloped the monarch's heart,
Noblemen gathered, a feast to impart.
Needy not forgotten, in grace's embrace,
Clothed and fed, the poor found solace.

In the palace grand, the news did spread,
Anticipation, the kingdom widespread.
Maya, in purity, her days did spend,
A prince awaited, a destiny to blend.

2. The Birth of the Prince

In moons' embrace, as prophesied by dreams,
Queen Maya awaited, a tale it deems.
A leader great, her womb would bestow,
Ten months passed, the promise in the glow.

To her king, she spoke of a journey near,
"My dear, to my kin, the time draws near."
Customs embraced, in her father's abode,
A decorated palanquin, the queen bestowed.

Soldiers marched, a path they did clear,
Guardians stood, her safety to revere.
Kapilavastu's queen, in procession grand,
To her father's kingdom, led by the hand.

Lumbini Park, a garden fair,
Nestled by Himalayas, scented air.
Under sala trees, where birds did sing,
The queen found solace, a pause in the spring.

Beneath the tree, birth's sacred art,
An auspicious day, a life to impart.
Vesak's full moon witnessed the event,
Triple celebration, a fate's consent.

The legend unfolds in strides of seven,
Lotus blooms grace earth's divine haven.
The infant's voice, a proclamation bold,
"I am chief of the world," his story told.

Homeward, Queen Maya swift returned,
Joy in the king's heart, the heir discerned.
The kingdom echoed with the joyous decree,
A new era dawned, a son born free.

3. The Naming Ceremony

In Suddhodana's court, wisdom's beacon shone,
Asita the Sage, in jungle, known.
Devas' song echoed, their joy profound,
A prince born at Lumbini, wisdom's ground.

To the king and queen, Asita came,
Their newborn son, his gaze did claim.
Before the sage, the infant laid,
Seeking glimpses of a future made.

Feet turned on the sage's head, a twist,
Marks revealed, destiny's gist.
"A great teacher," Asita proclaimed,
Salutations followed, honor untamed.

On the fifth day, a naming rite,
Wise men gathered, their insight bright.
Birthmarks studied, destiny foretold,
King of Kings or Wisest, stories unfold.

Kondanna's voice, the youngest wise,
"Buddha," he declared, truth in his eyes.
Siddhartha, the name, a wish fulfilled,
In epic destiny, the tale instilled.

4. The Prince's Education

In Kapilavastu's realm, a tale unfolds,
On the seventh day, destiny molds.
Siddhartha, bereft of a mother's embrace,
In Prajapati Gotami found solace.

A sister's love, young Siddhartha's guide,
In her care, by virtue, he'd abide.

To the school, a noble path to tread,
Sarva Mitra, his mentor, wisdom to spread.

Languages, history, sciences vast,
In the classroom's realm, the young prince surpassed.
Games of strength, archery's art,
Clever and swift, he played his part.

Wisdom's beacon, questions he'd unfold,
A pupil unmatched, tales of old.
Strongest, tallest, beauty untold,
In Kapilavastu, his virtues bold.

Never idle, misbehavior unknown,
Obedient to teachers, a virtue sown.
A friend to all, love's golden thread,
Siddhartha's saga, where destiny led.

5. Prince Siddhartha's Kindness

In kindness adorned, young Siddhartha's grace,
To all creatures, a warm embrace.
A skilled horseman, in contests, he'd shine,
Prizes aplenty, in the kingdom's design.

Wealth surrounded him, no hardships known,
Yet, compassion in his heart was sown.
For the toiling poor, a constant thought,
Their happiness, a quest he sought.

Through woods he wandered, kin at his side,
Devadatta, with bow and arrows, in stride.
A swan in flight, a target sought,
An arrow's flight, the creature caught.

Siddhartha, swift, to the wounded swan,
Touched by mercy, his gentle plan.
Arrow extracted, bleeding ceased,
With cool leaves' juice, the pain decreased.

In his palm, a soothing touch,
To the frightened swan, he offered much.
When Devadatta claimed his prize,
Siddhartha, resolute, defied the cries.

"Not yours," said the prince, his voice serene,
"Alive it stays, a fate unforeseen.
Had death claimed it in the sky,
Yours it would be, but it's mine, say I."

6. Prince Siddhartha's Wife

Foretold by wise men, destiny's decree,
Siddhartha's path, a monk's life to be.
Four sights awaited, a prophecy dire,
The king, in worry, sought to retire.

To shield his son from life's harsh plight,
Servants aplenty, distractions in sight.
Palaces three, in grandeur unfurled,
Winter, summer, and the rain-soaked world.

Gardens adorned, with dancers' grace,
Musicians played in a joyous space.
Wealth and beauty, Siddhartha's claim,
Yet, a yearning heart, a silent flame.

The king, in quest, sought wisdom's aid,
"Why is my son in sorrow laid?"
Sixteen years old, a prince forlorn,
Wise counsel sought, a bride was born.

A parade of beauty, girls in array,
To choose a wife, the prince's sway.
Yasodhara, with charm refined,
Received a gift, love's path assigned.

Valuable present, a token of love,
King observed, the prince's trove.
Yasodhara chosen, a royal decree,
Marriage bells rang for Siddhartha, free.

7. The Four Sights: Old Age

Within palace walls, a kingdom's heir,
Prepared for kingship, free of despair.
Yet, Siddhartha longed for a world unknown,
A prisoner in splendor, he sought to disown.

The king, hearing the prince's plea,
"Go, explore the city, let your eyes see.
But first, prepare for my noble son's gaze,
Decorate the streets in a joyous blaze."

Through city streets, with Channa by his side,
The prince encountered life's turning tide.
Beside the road, a humble abode,
An old man emerged, a sight forebode.

With silver-grey hair, in tattered attire,
Eyes dim and sunken, his plight entire.
Bent and trembling, a plea for his fate,
The prince perplexed, questioned his state.

"Channa, what sorcery is this?" he inquired,
"Why bent and trembling, by age inspired?
His eyes dim, his hair turned to grey,
Is this how all must end, you say?"

Channa explained, "Old age claims its due,

A fate for all, not just a few."
Saddened and stirred, the prince's decree,
Back to the palace, his thoughts ran free.

A royal feast, but joy turned to dread,
Old age's specter filled his head.
Sleepless night, contemplations deep,
The prince, awakened from an ageless sleep.

Everyone, he mused, would face the same,
Grey and frail, life's common claim.
The king, in worry, sought to enthrall,
More dances and dinners, a grander sprawl.

Yet, the prince sought truth, a path untold,
Kapilavastu's streets, on a day unrolled.
To witness life's journey, a quest unfurled,
Beyond palace gates, in a changing world.

8. The Four Sights: Sickness

A second venture to the city's embrace,
King's reluctance, marked on his face.
Dressed incognito, prince and Channa went,
Amongst simple folk, their steps intent.

No flags, no flowers, no joyous cheer,
Just common people, their toil sincere.
Blacksmiths, jewellers, in tasks immersed,
Creating beauty, their skills dispersed.

Daily work adorned the busy scene,
Bakers with warmth, their goods unseen.
Yet, amid this bustling, a painful sight,
A man on the ground, gripped by the blight.

Twisting, crying, agony profound,
Purple patches on his skin were found.
The prince, moved by compassion's call,
Ran forth to aid, a kindred soul.

Resting the man's head upon his knee,
"What ails you?" asked Siddhartha, gentle and free.
Channa explained, "Plague has taken hold,
His body burns, his story untold."

Inquiring more, the prince sought to know,
"Are there others plagued by this sorrow?"
Channa warned, "Touch not, lest you be,
A victim too, of this malady."

"Beyond this plague, what sorrows lie?"
Siddhartha questioned, his heart awry.
"Countless ills afflict mankind,
Suffering's grasp, no one behind."

A somber return to the palace's gate,
Thoughts entwined with the sick man's fate.
Siddhartha's heart, aching with the strife,
Contemplating the inevitable dance of life.

9. The Four Sights: Death

A second venture, his mind still weighed,
Siddhartha's soul, in sorrow laid.
The king, observing his son's unrest,
Agreed to explore, life's tumultuous quest.

Cloaked as noblemen, Channa by his side,
Through Kapilavastu, they did ride.
In the city's expanse, a procession grim,
A thin man on a plank, life's flickering hymn.

Silent and still, the carried man,
A plank, ablaze, his final span.
"What sorcery is this?" Siddhartha cried,
Channa explained, "In death, all abide."

"Does everyone meet this solemn fate?"
Asked Siddhartha, pondering life's weight.
"All living things, a truth untold,
Death's embrace, a destiny to behold."

Shocked and silent, the prince returned,
To his palace abode, where lessons churned.
In solitude, thoughts profound,
A resolve emerged, a purpose found.

"Everyone must face death's decree,
Yet, is there a way to set them free?
I must seek, unravel life's swirl,
Discover the secret to conquer death's twirl."

10. The Four Sights: A Monk

Amid contemplation, Siddhartha roamed,
To the city, his heart full, his thoughts intoned.
In orange robe, a monk's joyous stroll,
A seeker of peace, with a noble goal.

Curious, Siddhartha questioned his guide,
"Who is this monk, in robes beside?
With shaven hair and blissful grace,
What path does he tread, what noble space?"

"A monk, my prince, in temples abides,
From house to house, his sustenance derives.
Preaching peace, in goodness he thrives,
A life detached, a noble life he drives."

Joyful, the prince felt a newfound light,
"I too shall seek that peaceful height."
Through the park, his steps profound,
A decision made on sacred ground.

News arrived, a son was born,
An impediment, a new life adorned.
Named Rahula, a tie, a tether,
Yet, Siddhartha's resolve, untethered.

On the return, a princess spoke,
Of happiness in a handsome yoke.
In her words, a truth unfurled,
The prince sought to escape life's swirl.

"In beauty's guise, joy may be found,
Yet, obstacles and suffering abound.
To reach nirvana, a lasting peace,
I must depart, seek wisdom's release."

With gratitude, a pearl necklace bestowed,
A token of thanks, a teacher's fee bestowed.
To Kisagotami, whose words unveiled,
The path to enlightenment, a truth unassailed.

11. The Prince Leaves Home

In the palace halls, a grand affair,
A celebration filled the air.
Rahula's birth, the cause to rejoice,
Yet, Siddhartha heard a deeper voice.

The king, in worry, saw the prince's plight,
Fearing thoughts of departure in the night.
A feast unfolded, dancers in a trance,
Yet, Siddhartha was lost in somber advance.

Delicious fare and enchanting grace,

Lost on Siddhartha in deep thought's embrace.
As slumber claimed the reveling crowd,
He awoke to a scene both eerie and loud.

Once-beautiful dancers, singers so sweet,
Now in disarray, a pitiful feat.
Snoring like pigs, mouths agape wide,
A stark transformation, nowhere to hide.

Disgust in his heart, oppression profound,
His mind yearning for truths to be found.
Quietly, he rose from the palace of gold,
Seeking answers in the world to unfold.

To his son's cradle, a fleeting gaze,
A silent goodbye in moonlight's haze.
For the quest of understanding life's decree,
He left the palace, his soul set free.

Midnight's cloak shrouded the prince's flight,
On Kanthaka, his steed, in the still of night.
Channa by his side, their journey begun,
Leaving behind all that he had known.

To the river Anoma, by its peaceful shore,
He disrobed his princely attire, a choice to explore.
Cutting his hair, a symbol profound,
Simple garb adorned, a monk unbound.

Begging bowl in hand, a humble plea,
Channa, with sorrow, wished to be free.
Thrice he asked, "Let me follow, my master!"
But Siddhartha declined, a path to disaster.

Kanthaka, the loyal, refused to depart,
A faithful companion, a true work of art.
Tears streamed down from his sorrowful eyes,
As Siddhartha faded, beneath moonlit skies.

Over the horizon, where dreams and hopes
blend,
Kanthaka's heart shattered, a sorrowful end.
A prince became a wanderer in the night,
Seeking truths profound, in the moon's soft
light.

12. King Bimbisara's Offer

By Anoma's river, dressed in beggar's guise,
The prince embarked on truth's profound
reprise.
Through Rajagaha's streets, his path was laid,
Begging bowl in hand, like monks who prayed.

Once named Siddhartha, now Sakyamuni,
A sage, ascetic, no princely decree.
Most handsome youth, in neatness and health,
A wanderer seeking wisdom and stealth.

People called him "Ascetic Gotama,"
For royal titles caused him no drama.
Not bound by caste or riches of yore,
A seeker of truths, evermore.

King Bimbisara heard the tale unfold,
A beggar prince, a story untold.
Approaching gently, the monarch spoke,
Concern in his eyes, a friendship bespoke.

"Why wander thus, have you left your kin?
Half of my realm, your solace to win."
Grateful yet firm, the sage replied,
"I seek to end life's sorrows," he confided.

For love of kin and all mankind,
A quest profound, not riches entwined.

"I seek a way to halt life's decay,
To end old age, sickness's sway."

King's offer declined, on wisdom's quest,
Ascetic Gotama, on truth's behest.
Through Rajagaha's streets, he moved along,
A prince no more, his heart was strong.

13. The Buddha's First Teachers

In ancient India's realm of profound quest,
Where sages sought truths, their minds
abreast,
Ascetic Gotama, a seeker bold,
In pursuit of wisdom, tales untold.

Alara Kalama, renowned and wise,
A teacher esteemed 'neath sacred skies.
Gotama, eager, under him did train,
In meditation, his mind to gain.

He toiled and learned, surpassed his guide,
Alara Kalama, with reverence beside.
"Stay, my equal," the wise sage proposed,
Teach with me, let our knowledge be enclosed.

Yet Gotama, unswayed by this acclaim,
Saw still the shadows, life's transient game.
Old age and sickness, death's relentless kin,
His quest persisted, a fire within.

Onward he journeyed, a relentless soul,
Seeking answers to make life whole.
Uddaka, the sage of clever renown,
To him Gotama's earnest gaze was drawn.

Under Uddaka's tutelage profound,
Knowledge blossomed, wisdom unbound.
Yet suffering's root eluded the sage,
No cure for life's perennial stage.

Disheartened, Gotama walked away,
Resolute to find truth's radiant ray.
A solitary path, his destiny to unfold,
To fathom life's mysteries, untold.

14. Six Years of Searching

In quest profound, Ascetic Gotama strove,
His body tortured, a journey to self-prove.
Six friends, companions in ascetic fate,
Endured with him the trials, seeking the gate.

Uruvela witnessed their austere pursuit,
Wisdom sought in fasting, a relentless
pursuit.
A grain of rice a daily repast,
Becoming skeletal, shadows of the past.

Bamboo legs and a backbone like a rope,
Chest, a fragment, eyes sunk in hope.
Once golden skin, now turned to dusk,
A living skeleton, life's arduous husk.

Breath held till pain in every pore,
Collapsed, senseless, yet seeking more.
In forest depths and the graveyard's gloom,
Meditation endured, dispelling the doom.

Six years endured, yet wisdom not found,
In pain profound, in meditation bound.
Ascetic Gotama, disillusioned decree,
Austerity's end, a path yet to see.

Begging for nourishment, a body to mend,
Five friends departed, their patience did end.
Ascetic's journey, a relentless chore,
The quest for enlightenment, forevermore.

15. The Golden Bowl

In Senani, a village fair and near,
Lived Sujata, hopes whispered in her ear.
Long she yearned for wedded bliss,
Under the banyan tree, she sought divine kiss.

A husband, a son, her fervent plea,
Prayers offered beneath the sacred tree.
Her wish granted, a joy profound,
A husband found, in love they're bound.

Sujata, rich in cattle grand,
Milking sweet creeper in the fertile land.
A thousand cows, a bounty rare,
For the tree-god's grace, a fervent prayer.

Milk cascading, a sacred quest,
A golden bowl, the gods addressed.
A dance of joy, the servant's delight,
News of the god, a heavenly insight.

To the banyan tree, Sujata drew near,
Found a sage in meditation clear.
Golden and serene, Ascetic divine,
Unaware he's Gotama, on the path to shine.

Respectful bow, the milk-rice shared,
Sujata's gift, by gods declared.
The holy man ate, then to the river he waded,
Bathed in Neranjara, destiny awaited.

The golden bowl, a vessel bright,

Thrown to the river, a symbolic rite.
"If enlightenment today is meant to be,
Upstream it goes, a sign to see."

Against the current, the bowl did steer,
A celestial message, crystal clear.
In the middle it danced, a mystical flow,
Gotama's journey, an enlightenment to show.

16. Striving for Enlightenment

As twilight's veil embraced the quiet earth,
Gotama sought the banyan's sacred berth.
Cross-legged, eastward-facing, steadfast and serene,
A vow proclaimed, a quest unseen.

"Through skin and nerve, through life's crimson flow,
I shall not leave until wisdom I know.
Supreme enlightenment, the beacon divine,
Leading to joy, eternal, benign."

Evil thoughts, a Mara's dark brigade,
Besieged his mind, desire's masquerade.
Craving, fear, and attachments' snare,
Yet Gotama, resolute, sat in prayer.

Calm and brave, the first night passed,
Past lives unveiled, a revelation vast.
In the second watch, impermanence unfurled,
Life's fleeting dance, in cycles twirled.

The third watch unveiled the cause concealed,
Suffering's roots, in wisdom revealed.
The end of sorrow, a radiant gleam,

Freedom from age, death's shadowy dream.

17. The Sun of Enlightenment Shines

The storm of Mara's might had spent its ire,
Retreating shadows, moon and stars conspire.
Beneath the bodhi tree, the Blessed One in peace,
Into a deep meditation, wisdom's release.

He soared above, like an eagle's graceful flight,
Gazing upon past lives, births woven tight.
A cosmic dance, birth and death's endless sway,
Karma's decree, leading souls astray.

Good actions yield heavenly births, ephemeral bliss,
Yet impermanence reigns, nothing amiss.
In hellish realms, suffering persists,
All caught in existence's relentless twists.

Clearer still, the soul laid bare,
Broken threads, illusions to repair.
Ignorance, the cause, a binding snare,
In clinging to the transient, a perilous affair.

When desire wanes, illusions flee,
Ignorance dissipates, truth to see.
The sun of enlightenment brightly gleams,
In wisdom's radiance, all illusions teem.

Perfected in wisdom, craving's demise,
No more births, no more lies.

Beneath the bodhi tree, serene and bright,
The Perfect One bathed in wisdom's light.

Compassion-filled, nirvana's embrace,
The Buddha sat, in perfect peace, a sacred space.
At dawn's gentle whisper, enlightenment's verse,
The house of sorrow, no more to coerce.

"Through samsara's births, I sought in vain,
The house's builder, endless pain.
Builder seen, no more to roam,
Craving's end, I've found my home."

18. Seven Weeks After the Enlightenment

UNDER THE BODHI TREE

Beneath the sacred Bodhi's leafy shade,
The Buddha sat, his peace newly made.
A week had passed since enlightenment's kiss,
Freedom and joy, in serene bliss.

No more the mind in tumult roared,
Disturbing thoughts, now gently stored.
Calm and blissful, the sage did rest,
In the tranquil haven, his soul's nest.

GAZING AT THE TREE

In the second week, beneath the moonlit gleam,
The Buddha stood by the bodhi tree, a sacred beam.
His eyes unmoved, in gratitude profound,
For shelter and struggle on hallowed ground.

In deep reflection, he honored the tree,
That witnessed his journey to true clarity.
Buddhists, inspired by this sacred rite,
Respect the bodhi, bathed in moonlight.

THE GOLDEN BRIDGE

In the third week, the Buddha, wise and serene,
The devas in doubt, their faith to glean.
Through the mind's eye, he showcased his might,
A golden bridge, suspended in celestial light.

In the heavens above, uncertainty reigned,
Enlightenment doubted, questions sustained.
To prove his mastery, his mind took flight,
A golden bridge, testament to his enlightened height.

Airborne traverse, a celestial feat,
A week he walked, a divine heartbeat.
The bridge of gold, a radiant decree,
Proclaiming his truth for all to see.

THE JEWELLED CHAMBER

In the fourth week, a jewelled chamber did appear,
A creation divine, where wisdom drew near.
Seated within, in contemplative might,
He delved into teachings, bathed in celestial light.

The "Detailed Teaching" unfolded in his mind,
Abhidhamma's essence, profound and refined.
His body and spirit, in purity aligned,
Six hues emerged, a spectacle enshrined.

Blue rays for confidence, unwavering and bold,
Yellow, holiness, a radiance untold.
Red, the flame of wisdom, brilliantly rolled,
White purity, a beacon to behold.

Orange gleamed for desirelessness profound,
The mixed hues in unity, virtues unbound.
Each shade portrayed a virtue divine,
A Buddhist flag, in brilliance to shine.

THREE GIRLS

In the fifth week, 'neath a banyan's shade,
Three charming nymphs, in seductive parade.
Tanha, Rati, and Raga, their names,
Danced with allure, igniting tempting flames.

Yet steadfast sat the Buddha in deep thought,
Meditating on truths, undisturbed, uncaught.
Their charming dance, a fleeting play,
In pursuit of enlightenment, he held his stay.

With graceful moves and enticing art,
They sought to stir, to captivate his heart.
But the sage unmoved, his focus retained,
In tranquil meditation, wisdom gained.

As the dance concluded, their efforts in vain,
The nymphs departed, leaving peace to reign.
In the quest for truth, undeterred, he trod,
A resolute seeker on the path to God.

THE MUCALINDA TREE

'Neath mucalinda's branches, Buddha sought reprieve,
In meditation deep, where truth and wisdom weave.

Rain poured relentlessly, a torrential dance,
Yet a serpent king emerged, in a protective trance.

Seven times coiled, a regal cobra's embrace,
Shielding the sage in a divine, enchanted space.
Hood extended, shelter from the watery veil,
A serpentine guardian, gentle and hale.

For seven days and nights, in mystical accord,
Nature's grandeur met a spiritual lord.
As raindrops ceased, the serpent's form transformed,
A youth emerged, the divine dance performed.

In reverence, he bowed to the enlightened seer,
Who spoke of contentment, truths all could revere.
Happiness, the reward for a tranquil mind,
For those with goodwill, to all beings aligned.

No attachments bind, beyond desire's shore,
The vanishing ego, highest bliss to explore.
In the serenity of truth, profound and vast,
Buddha's words echoed, a wisdom that would last.

THE RAJAYATANA TREE

'Neath rajayatana's branches, Buddha's vigil held,
In the seventh week, where truth and wisdom swelled.
Seven weeks of fasting, a spiritual feat,
As the sage meditated in contemplative seat.

Two merchants, Tapussa and Bhallika by name,
Approached with reverence, their hearts aflame.
Rice cakes and honey, an offering sincere,
Breaking the fast, the dawning of spiritual cheer.

In the Buddha's presence, enlightenment unfurled,
Wisdom shared, a transformative world.
The first lay followers, their refuge found,
In Buddha's teachings, on sacred ground.

No Sangha yet formed, monks and nuns to be,
Two merchants sought more, a sacred decree.
Asking for keepsakes, relics to embrace,
Buddha bestowed hair, a sacred trace.

Kesa Datu, these relics renowned,
Carried by merchants, reverence unbound.
In Burma's land, the Shwedagon Pagoda's embrace,
Held the sacred remnants, a symbol of grace.

19. The First Five Monks

To Benares, the Buddha set his course,
Seeking friends, the path of wisdom to endorse.
Asita, Alara, Uddaka, now with the dead,
But comrades in Benares, where he'd be led.

In Sarnath's grove, the Deer Park's embrace,
Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahanama, Assaji in place.
Skepticism echoed, “Luxury-lover,” they decried,

Yet, as he neared, a transformation they couldn't hide.

Noble and majestic, an aura profound,
Old judgments crumbled, a new truth found.
Forgetful of the pact to show no regard,
In awe, they approached, their agreement marred.

Robe and bowl taken, a seat prepared with care,
Water for his feet, a gesture beyond compare.
Seated amidst them, the Buddha began to proclaim,
The way to deathlessness, a truth to reclaim.

"Listen, ascetics, to the path supreme,
Beyond life and death, a transcendent dream.
The Middle Way, I bid you tread,
Avoid extremes that veer misled."

Supreme knowledge and insight proclaimed,
The Buddha's truth, in their hearts, inflamed.
Skeptical at first, yet willing to heed,
To the Deer Park's soil, a sacred seed.

Four Noble Truths, Eightfold Path unfurls,
Freedom from suffering, enlightenment hurls.
In Sarnath's grove, the monastic order's birth,
The first five ascetics found their rebirth.

20.The Buddha's First Teaching

Beneath Asalha's moon, a sacred decree,
In Sarnath's Deer Park, by a bodhi tree.

The Buddha's wisdom, a luminous stream,
Unfolded in verses, like a waking dream.

I. Middle Way's Embrace

In Isipatana's shade, where breezes whisper low,
Deer Park embraced a sage, with teachings to bestow.
Ascetics, once companions, saw a change unfold,
Noble and majestic, a story to be told.

II. The Turning Wheel of Truth

July's full moon aglow, the Buddha began to share,
The Dhammacakkappavaṭṭana, Truth's turning flare.
Devas and brahmas, celestial audience stood,
To hear the Four Noble Truths, as the Buddha would.

III. The Call to the Middle Way

"Avoid extremes," he urged, in the sacred glade,
Sensual allure abandoned, cravings to evade.
Self-mortification's torment, a perilous flight,
Middle Way revealed, in wisdom's soft light.

IV. Four Noble Truths Unveiled

First Truth proclaimed, life's inherent pain,
Craving its root, in the heart's deep terrain.
Suffering's end in nirvana's sweet grace,
Eightfold Path's journey, a noble embrace.

V. The Noble Eightfold Path

Right understanding, Truth's opening door,
Right attitude bloomed, goodwill evermore.
Speech, action, livelihood in virtue's light,
Unwholesome shadows vanished from sight.

VI. The Effort of Righteous Will

Effort, a striving, in meditative sway,
Cease the unwholesome, let goodness hold sway.
Mindfulness, a beacon, in thought, in breath,
Concentration's dance, leading to life's depth.

VII. Mindful Presence in the Now

Body, sensations, thoughts in mindful array,
Fourfold mindfulness, a guide on the way.
Concentration, one-pointed focus sublime,
In meditation's embrace, transcending time.

VIII. The Triad of Purity's Ascent

Morality's shelter, in actions that define,
Concentration's calm, wisdom's radiant shrine.
The path unfolds in this triad so divine,
Buddha's advice, in purity does entwine.

IX. The Threefold Path in Verse

To cease from evil, in goodness immerse,
The counsel echoed, a universal verse.
A journey unfolds, in the Buddha's decree,
To purity's summit, where all Buddhas be.

21. The Serpent King

Beneath the moonlit skies, the Buddha's light,
A journey South, the path was set in flight.
To Magadha's realm, where rivers gently
stream,
In tranquil lands, a tale begins to gleam.

Three brothers dwelling, by the river's grace,
Uruvela Kassapa, wisdom in his embrace.
Nadi and Gaya, in contemplation's sway,
With followers by their side, a realm to
survey.

As twilight fell, the Buddha, lone and wise,
To Uruvela's hut, in a humble guise.
"May I rest in your kitchen's tranquil den?"
Uruvela hesitates, fears rise again.

"There lies a serpent king, fierce and bold,
In the kitchen's heart, where tales are told."
Buddha, undeterred, with a gentle plea,
"I'll stay, unharmed, let my love decree."

Into the kitchen, where shadows dance,
Buddha lay on grass, in a humble trance.
The serpent, angered, his venomous might,
But Buddha's love subdued, the serpentine
fight.

As dawn approached, Uruvela's eyes in quest,
Entered the kitchen, finding peace and rest.
"Did the serpent strike? Are you harmed or
whole?"
Buddha unveils the bowl, revealing the soul.

Out emerges the king, once fierce and wild,
Now tamed by love, as a trusting child.

Uruvela astounded, in awe did stand,
Witness to the Buddha's compassionate hand.

"Can I learn this art?" Uruvela inquires,
The Buddha, a sage, kindles wisdom's fires.
Teachings unfold, like rivers gently flow,
Serene as moonlight, wisdom's radiant glow.

Brothers and followers, enchanted and amazed,
By the Buddha's Dharma, their hearts embraced.
From fear to devotion, in the serpent's wake,
A transformative journey, for enlightenment's
sake.

22. Returning Home

In Kapilavaḍḍhu's realm, where whispers flow,
King Suddhodana, longing to bestow,
Nine messengers sent, a humble plea,
To bring the Buddha back, his son to see.

Monks they became, in wisdom's sweet embrace,
The Buddha's teachings, a celestial grace.
The message lost, in the Dharma's sway,
A kingdom yearns, where Buddhas play.

Arrangements made, a park named Nigrodha,
Awaited the Buddha, under Dhamma's coda.
But when he tarried, delayed by fate,
King's playmate sent, a call to reinstate.

Kapilavaḍḍhu stirred, a city's breath,
Flocking to see, the Buddha's gentle path.
His kin declared, "Our brother, nephew dear,
Our grandson walks, with wisdom clear."

Yet some perceived, in ignorance confined,
Not realizing the Buddha's enlightened mind.

A miracle unfolded, the "Twin Miracle"
displayed,
In reverence, the king his respects conveyed.

Begging bowl in hand, the next dawn's grace,
Door to door, the Buddha set his pace.
The king vexed, his voice did strain,
"Why tarnish me, my son, this noble name?"

"O Great King," Buddha's calm reply,
"Our custom guides, beneath the open sky.
Not to shame you, dear father, mine,
But tradition and truth in every line."

Perplexed, the king sought to comprehend,
A plea to cease, a custom to mend.
But Buddha explained, with gentle sway,
A Buddha's path, an ancient way.

In the palace halls, at the king's request,
Food was partaken, an offering blessed.
A dance of customs, a sacred art,
Blending tradition, where compassion starts.

23. The Story of Princess Yasodhara

When twilight cast its tender glow,
And evening's meal, the Buddha took below.
In robes of saffron, monk's attire,
Surprising all, a princely soul's desire.

His courtiers came, with awe in their gaze,
Except fair Yasodhara, in pensive maze.
Within her chamber, contemplation deep,
"Is he the Buddha?" in her heart, did seep.

"He's now the Enlightened One, divine,
To Buddhas' lineage, his path align.
Should I approach? Does he require?
I'll linger here, my soul's inquire."

The Buddha sought her, compassion's art,
Handing the bowl, a message to impart.
"Let her pay respect as she deems,
No words need flow, in love's silent streams."

Yasodhara, in her sacred space,
Rushed to him, with a tear-streaked grace.
Prostrate she fell, at his feet she cried,
Tears anointing, where the truth resides.

He, serene, with quiet might,
Let her weep, in the soft moonlight.
The king observed, with father's pride,
"My virtuous child, by your side."

A tale not new, in cycles past,
Virtue and love, an enduring cast.
The Buddha spoke, in wisdom's lore,
"Devotion transcends, forevermore."

24. The Story of Prince Nanda

In Kapilavatthu's walls of might,
A royal feast, a joyous rite.
Prince Nanda's wedding, blissful scene,
A bride, Princess Janapada, serene.

The Buddha graced, with noble air,
Blessed the union, divinely rare.
His bowl bestowed, a sacred grace,
Then parted ways, in tranquil pace.

Within the temple's sacred fold,
Nanda, his heart in tales untold.
The Buddha spoke, in wisdom's rhyme,
"Nanda, seek a path sublime."

"Monkhood calls, would you aspire?"
Nanda's soul, set afire.
Ordained by Buddha's sacred hand,
A monk, he roamed the holy land.

Yet Nanda, in his somber hour,
Recalled the bridal, joyous bower.
His heart entwined with love's embrace,
A yearning soul, a fateful chase.

"Why the sorrow?" monks inquired,
"Monk's life, the path desired?"
But Nanda's gaze, a distant stare,
His heart entangled in love's snare.

Buddha, with compassion's sway,
To Nanda spoke, to guide his way.
A burnt she-monkey, a poignant view,
A parable, wisdom to imbue.

"Nanda, mark this tale, so wise,
Seek celestial realms in the skies."
Nymphs appeared, ethereal grace,
Comparisons in beauty's trace.

"Janapada Kalyani, fair and true,
Yet nymphs, in splendor, outvalue.
To gain such beings in celestial hue,
Embrace monkhood, virtuous and true."

Nanda, stirred by wisdom's call,
Embraced the path, despite love's thrall.
Monk's life, a quest for realms divine,

In Buddha's light, his soul would shine.

25. The Story of Prince Rahula

Upon the seventh dawn, young Rahula adorned,
Princess Yasodhara, in wisdom, was informed.
"Behold your father," she said with grace,
"Seek your inheritance in this sacred space."

In innocence, Rahula, with eyes so bright,
To Buddha ventured, bathed in pure light.
"Father," he spoke, a request so mild,
"Even your shadow, to me, is beguiled."

As Buddha left the palace, Rahula trailed,
"Grant me my inheritance," innocence hailed.
Yet Buddha pondered, in the tranquil grove,
A wealth beyond what worldly fortunes strove.

Sariputta summoned, with sage-like plea,
To ordain Rahula, to set him free.
For worldly riches, fraught with pain,
A heritage divine, Buddha would ordain.

King Suddhodana, with grief profound,
Grandson a monk, his heart was bound.
"Your love departed," the monarch sighed,
"Ordain not without parental guide."

A pact with sorrow, the Buddha agreed,
No ordination without kin's heed.
Inheritances divine, wisdom's decree,
Passed down with love, from father to be.

26. The Two Chief Disciples

Near Rajagaha's embrace, two villages stood,
Upatissa and Kolita, their friendship so good.
Sari, fair wife of Upatissa, bore a son one day,
Sariputta, destined for a noble way.

Simultaneously, Kolita's home shared the mirth,
Moggali's newborn, destined for a sacred birth.
Young Sariputta and Moggallana, as friends they'd grow,
Yearning for truths, to life's mysteries they'd go.

In the realm of dramas, their young hearts awoke,
Seeking beyond plays, where profound truths spoke.
To the sage Sanjaya's teachings, they did incline,
Yet found emptiness, and left it all behind.

Promising each other in a sacred pact,
To seek wisdom profound, a truth to enact.
In Rajagaha's street, a moment profound,
Assaji the ascetic, wisdom he crowned.

Sariputta, discerning, approached with grace,
Assaji's countenance, a serene embrace.
"Who is your teacher?" Sariputta inquired,
Assaji spoke, his wisdom transpired.

"I follow the Buddha, Sakya's noble son,
He teaches the path that must be trod and won."

Sariputta, swift in understanding's flight,
Grasped the teachings, enlightened insight.

"If all has a cause, and cessation too,
Then sorrow and suffering bid adieu."
Sariputta, enlightened, sought his friend,
To Moggallana, the truth would append.

Moggallana, discerning, saw in his friend's eyes,
The gleam of truth, the wisdom that lies.
They joined the Buddha, disciples profound,
Sariputta's wisdom, Moggallana's miracles renowned.

27. The Story of Poor Sopako

In the realm of sorrow, a tale unfolds,
Of Sopaka, young, in woes, his destiny holds.
Born to the poor, in a cruel twist of fate,
His father gone, a stepfather's wrath to contemplate.

Kind and innocent, poor Sopaka bore,
A wicked stepfather's relentless scorn.
Beaten and scolded, his tender heart distressed,
A life in shadows, in misery, oppressed.

One evening, a deceptive kindness did appear,
A walk proposed, Sopaka's heart sincere.
To the cemetery, where shadows dance,
His stepfather's malice, a wicked chance.

Bound to a corpse, in the cold night air,
Alone and crying, consumed by despair.

Fear clung to him, as darkness grew,
Wild creatures' cries, an ominous cue.

In the cemetery's eerie gloom,
A noble figure dispelled the doom.
Radiant and kind, a celestial sight,
Approaching Sopaka in the silent night.

"Fear not, young one," the figure spoke,
With a soothing voice that suffering broke.
Breaking bonds, as if a dream,
Sopaka stood by the Buddha's gleam.

Jetavana's monastery, a sanctuary found,
The Buddha bathed him, compassion unbound.
Clothed and fed, consoled and bright,
Sopaka, reborn in the Buddha's light.

Meanwhile, the stepfather returned home,
To face questions, secrets to disown.
To Sopaka's mother, he told a deceit,
Her heartache and worry, an endless beat.

Early the next day, to the Buddha she came,
A mother in anguish, her soul in flame.
"Why do you cry, sister?" the Buddha inquired,
"Your son is safe," his words inspired.

Before her eyes, a joyous sight,
Sopaka, transformed, in monk's white.
Reunited mother and son, by wisdom swayed,
In the Buddha's teachings, they found aid.

28. The Story of Lady Patacara

In the ancient days of the Buddha's light,

In a tale of sorrow, veiled in the night.
A maiden named Patacara, fair and free,
Trapped in the towers of parental decree.

Within those walls, her destiny confined,
Love's yearning heart, a secret bind.
Marriage arranged, a wealthy heir in sight,
Yet love had stirred, a clandestine flight.

Dressed as a servant, in the dawn's embrace,
She fled her mansion, a bold deface.
To the far horizon, with her love she'd run,
Bound by passion, two hearts as one.

In a distant haven, their love did bloom,
Yet shadows cast upon their marital room.
Pregnant with life, a mother's plea,
To return home, she wished to be.

Her husband resisted, fear in his eyes,
To face her kin, a torment he'd surmise.
A tale of storms, and a tragic fate,
Unraveling threads of love too late.

Twice she left, on a stormy night,
Bearing life, her burden light.
A husband lost to a venomous bite,
A cruel twist in destiny's fight.

Through tempests and rivers, her agony unfurls,
Her sons, like leaves, lost to the world.
A hawk's cruel flight, a river's fierce flow,
A mother's heartache, in tears did grow.

In Savatthi's city, a man she implored,
To speak of her family, tales abhorred.
Their house collapsed, the rain's cruel spree,
Her kin entwined in fate's harsh decree.

Collapsed with grief, she heard the news,
A funeral pyre, where sorrow strews.
Taken to Jetavana, where wisdom lies,
The Buddha's voice, a soothing guise.

Bathed, clothed, and fed, her spirit revived,
In the Buddha's presence, her anguish
contrived.
Insight blossomed, grief transformed,
Patacara sought refuge, her soul informed.

Bhikkhuni ordained, in the Buddha's fold,
A tale of sorrow, in verses told.
In the tapestry of life, where threads are
spun,
Patacara's journey, under the enlightened sun.

29. Angulimala, The Bandit

In the realm of Kosala, a tale unfolds,
Of Angulimala, a story to be told.
Born to Bhaggawa, adviser wise,
A son destined for darkened skies.

Weapons gleamed at the child's birth,
A prophecy foretold, a fate unearth.
The king perplexed, sought reasons why,
A son's bright destiny, painted the sky.

A bandit's path, fate had decreed,
A solo raider, driven by greed.
The father's plea to spare his life,
Not death, but justice, amid the strife.

Sent to learn, young Ahinsaka's fate,
A scholar's promise, sealed by hate.
Envy whispered, shadows cast,

A teacher's vendetta, a die was cast.

To the jungle highway, Ahinsaka strode,
A vow to fulfill, on a murderous road.
Fingers severed, a gruesome toll,
Angulimala, a hunter of soul.

A garland woven, of fingers grim,
A tale of terror, life turned dim.
His mother wept, her heart torn,
Bhaggawa's son, in darkness born.

The king, alarmed, gathered might,
To capture the bandit, end the night.
Yet Mantani, a mother's plea,
Sought mercy for her progeny.

The jungle echoed with the cries,
Of Angulimala, a terror rise.
The Buddha, a sage, saw the plight,
Resolved to end this gruesome fight.

Beneath the trees, where shadows play,
Mother and son on a collision way.
Yet, the Buddha stepped in between,
A divine presence, a force unseen.

Angulimala, with sword in hand,
Chased the Buddha, through the land.
Yet the sage eluded, swift and sly,
A dance of mercy 'neath the sky.

"Stop, stand still!" Angulimala cried,
His strength depleted, wearied stride.
The Buddha spoke, a truth revealed,
A mercy profound, a fate unsealed.

"I stand still, Angulimala, evermore,
Merciful to all, a living lore.

While you, relentless, cruel and wild,
I stand still, you stand not stilled."

The bandit's heart, touched by grace,
Felled his weapon, knelt in that space.
Blessed by the Buddha, the monk reborn,
Angulimala, from darkness torn.

The king, with an army fierce,
To hunt the bandit, end the pierce.
Yet, a shaven head, in robes of gold,
Transformed the bandit, stories unfold.

The Buddha's teachings, a soothing balm,
To soldiers, king, and Angulimala, calm.
A tale of redemption, in Dharma's light,
Angulimala, now a beacon bright.

30. Wakkali and the Buddha

In Savatthi's land, where shadows dance,
A youth named Wakkali, in a trance.
Admiring Buddha's beauty bright,
A yearning heart, seeking the light.

"I dwell at home, away from sight,
Yet, as a monk, I'd see the light."
To the temple gates, he did stride,
Ordained by Buddha, his chosen guide.

Now Wakkali, a shadow near,
Admired the sage, without a peer.
No wisdom sought, no knowledge sought,
In Buddha's presence, his heart was caught.

The Buddha, patient, waited still,
For Wakkali's mind to grasp the skill.
But shadows lingered, wisdom veiled,

In admiration, Wakkali sailed.

Three months' retreat, the Buddha led,
To Rajagaha, the sage was sped.
Wakkali left, alone and lost,
In misery, his soul was tossed.

"Three months of woe, a heavy fate,
I'd rather meet an early date.
Vultures' Peak, my chosen end,
Where sorrow's threads, I'll surely rend."

The Buddha, with a mindful gaze,
Saw Wakkali, in sorrow's haze.
A radiant image, swift dispatched,
On Vultures' Peak, a life unlatched.

Before the edge, where death seemed nigh,
The Buddha's form, in the sky.
Wakkali, in awe, sorrow's end,
Vanished woes, a newfound friend.

"The faithful heart, in joy abides,
In Buddha's light, suffering hides.
Perfect faith, a path untold,
To peace and joy, the heart consoled."

31. Sunita, The Scavenger

In Savatthi's realm, where shadows lay,
A scavenger named Sunita, in dismay.
A road-sweeper's life, meager and bare,
No refuge, no solace, in the world unfair.

He toiled on roads, dusty and vile,
His humble existence, a societal trial.
An outcast's label, a heavy chain,
In others' joy, he found only pain.

Caste-bound shackles, a cruel decree,
For Sunita, a life of misery.
As higher castes passed, he must hide,
His shadow deemed impure, cast aside.

One fateful day, midst dirt and grime,
The Buddha approached, a figure sublime.
Sunita, awestruck, his palms unite,
In the Buddha's presence, a glimmering light.

With gentle words, the Buddha spoke,
To the scavenger, whose spirit awoke.
"Friend Sunita, leave this life behind,
Join my path, solace you'll find."

No orders harsh, but kindness rare,
A monk reborn from life unfair.
Tears in his eyes, joy in his heart,
From societal chains, he'd depart.

Ordained by the Buddha, a sacred vow,
Sunita's identity transformed, somehow.
No more a scavenger, no outcast scorned,
In the Buddha's light, a new life adorned.

Caste forgotten, respect bestowed,
Kings and commanders, a new abode.
Sunita, once scorned, now revered,
In the Buddha's Sangha, all boundaries cleared.

32. The Buddha and the Sick Monk

In a monastery's hallowed hall,
The Buddha walked, attended by all.

Amidst the brethren, a sickly sight,
A monk lay ailing, in desperate plight.

Loathsome disease, its cruel embrace,
Yet, brethren cold, no solace, no grace.
The Buddha, moved by compassion's call,
Approached the ill monk's bedside, tall.

Ananda summoned, a disciple true,
Together they tended, the suffering through.
Bathed the afflicted, bedclothes replaced,
Eased the pain, a tender touch embraced.

The Buddha's words, a thunderous decree,
Echoed through the monastery, fierce and free.
"Neglect not the ill, your brethren's kin,
In serving the sick, true virtue begin."

To the monks, a reprimand sincere,
A lesson imparted, crystal clear.
"Serve the suffering," the Buddha proclaimed,
In their care, his essence, untamed.

PART 2:

1. The Buddha's Daily Routine

In five-fold rhythms, the Buddha's day,
A sacred dance in wisdom's array.
Morning, noon, and through the night,
Each part a verse, in enlightenment's light.

The Morning Session:
At dawn's embrace, the Buddha would rise,
A wash, a meditation, seeking the wise.
From dawn to mid-morn, his eyes profound,
Surveyed the world, compassion unbound.

In robes, he stepped, a silent alms traverse,
Eyes on the ground, blessings to disperse.
Begging not for self, but for those in need,
A humble path, on righteousness to feed.

Lunchtime discourse, wisdom freely shared,
In homes, his teachings, compassion flared.
Disciples trailing, in single-file line,
A sacred journey, wisdom to entwine.

The Afternoon Session:
As shadows grew long, the Buddha's repose,
Monks sought guidance, their questions arose.
Retreating to chambers, contemplation's hour,
A sage's wisdom, a divine power.

With mental eye, the world he'd scan,
Seeking hearts yearning, a helping hand.
To waiting souls, his teachings clear,

Joy for the wise, dispelling shadows near.

The First Watch:
The sun descended, the day's zeal waned,
Yet seekers came, wisdom to be gained.
Questions pondered, mysteries untwined,
In the first watch, enlightenment designed.

The Middle Watch:
As night embraced, the devas sought,
The Buddha's truths, in silence taught.
Answers profound, to celestial minds,
The middle watch, enlightenment finds.

The Last Watch:
A moonlit path, the Buddha would tread,
Meditation's dance, a weary soul fed.
An hour of sleep, in tranquility sought,
His tireless journey, enlightenment brought.

Through watches and hours, a ceaseless flow,
Blessings bestowed, compassion's glow.
In a single hour, his eyelids closed,
Yet, in every moment, the universe he composed.

2. The Conversion of Yasha

In the sacred Deer Park's serene domain,
Young Yasha sought the Buddha, free from mundane chain.
Enthralled by teachings, he, a monk embraced,
A path of wisdom, in solitude, he traced.

A worried father, with a heavy heart,
Sought news of a son, fearing shadows in the dark.
The Buddha spoke, allaying fears with grace,

"Your son has found refuge, in the Dharma's embrace."

Fifty-four companions, drawn by Yasha's quest,
Gathered around, by wisdom's call addressed.
In the tranquil Deer Park, a sacred lore,
Sixty souls embraced truth, forevermore.

3. King Bimbisara: Royal Patron

In Rajagaha's regal halls, a pact was made,
King Bimbisara's kingdom, a tempting trade.
Half his realm for wisdom's quest so grand,
Ascetic Gautama declined, sand slipping through the hand.

The Buddha, enlightened, kept his vow,
To Rajagaha he returned, with disciples in a reverent bow.
King Bimbisara, eager, a welcome parade,
To the Buddha and disciples, his homage displayed.

Confusion stirred among the subjects fair,
Buddha or Kassapa, whom to declare?
The Buddha, perceiving the unspoken thought,
Questioned Kassapa, the truth to be sought.

Kassapa, humble, in wisdom's light,
Prefer nirvana's peace over fleeting delight.
Before the Buddha, he bowed with devotion,
"My teacher is He, the Supreme Ocean."

Joy swept the hearts, conversion proclaimed,
King Bimbisara, sotapanna, his soul reclaimed.
Five wishes, now in enlightenment's glow,

Fulfilled by the Buddha, whose teachings flow.

In gratitude, the king bestowed,
A Bamboo Grove, where truths bestowed.
Three seasons passed in serene retreat,
Dharma echoed, a melody sweet.

Yet destiny, a bitter twist unfurled,
Past karma cast, a shadow on this worldly swirl.
King Bimbisara, ruler fair and just,
Met untimely doom, his fate unjust.

4. Visakha. Great Female Supporter

In Savatthi's splendor, a maiden fair,
Visakha, virtuous, with grace to spare.
At seven, the Buddha's teachings she'd embrace,
Sainthood's first stage, in wisdom's gentle grace.

At fifteen, a union with Punnavaddhana's name,
A bride adorned with beauty's radiant flame.
Her father's counsel, a guide for marital art,
Tenfold wisdom, a compass for the heart.

In Rajagaha's dwelling, she proved her worth,
A virtuous wife, her actions gave birth.
Generosity and kindness, her guiding light,
Loved by all, a city in joy took flight.

A monk sought alms, while feasting held sway,
Visakha's tact, a kind word to convey.
A misunderstood jest, a family's strife,
Yet she'd prove her innocence, wisdom rife.

Eight clansmen summoned, with doubts in their eyes,
Visakha's defense, truth never denies.
A monk's sweet porridge, an act misunderstood,
Wisdom's clarion, where innocence stood.

Misunderstandings quelled, her wisdom shone,
Her father-in-law's heart, with insight sown.
To Buddha's teachings, their abode was graced,
Sotapanna he became, in wisdom embraced.

Pubbarama's monastery, her grand creation,
For monks to seek truth, a sacred foundation.
Six rainy seasons, the Buddha's abode,
Visakha's joy, a benevolent ode.

A discourse unfolded, virtues in her define,
Confidence, virtue, charity, and wisdom shine.
A woman of talents, disputes she'd mend,
Vinaya's guide, her wisdom to commend.

5. Devadatta, the Buddha's Enemy

In ages past, a tale unfolds,
Of Devadatta, whose heart turned cold.
Born of royal blood, kin to Buddha's name,
Yet jealousy and ill will fueled his flame.

Once a monk of grace, with psychic might,
He soared in practice, a celestial light.
Yet darkness crept, ambition took hold,
And enmity against the Buddha bold.

In grand assembly, pride led his way,
He sought to lead, the Sangha to sway.

But Buddha, wise, declined his yearning plea,
A bitter vow, Devadatta set free.

With twisted plots, and cruel design,
He aimed to end the Buddha's sacred line.
Assassins hired, a deadly cascade,
Yet met with mercy, their plans betrayed.

A rock sent hurtling, from Vultures' Peak,
Drew blood, but Buddha showed no sign of weak.
Compassion flowed from the wounded soul,
"Poor fool," he sighed, for Devadatta's goal.

A drunken elephant, Nalagiri fierce,
A pawn in schemes, Devadatta's pierce.
But love prevailed, from Buddha's heart,
The raging beast, tamed, played its part.

Deception then, a divisive scheme,
To split the Sangha, a wicked dream.
Five rules proposed, a misguided plea,
Yet Buddha's wisdom, Devadatta couldn't decree.

Suffering came, as karma took its toll,
Devadatta, once bold, now sought the goal.
Regret in illness, he longed to see,
The Buddha's grace before eternity.

Fruit of his deeds, a woeful fate,
Yet in his past, a holy state.
A future Buddha, a distant dawn,
Devadatta's redemption, in cycles drawn.

6. The Buddha and the Queen

In the realm where shadows dance, a tale unfolds,

Of Khema, once a queen with beauty to behold.
King Bimbisara's realm, where breezes play,
In Bamboo Grove, a monastery's sacred sway.

Khema, fair as moonlight on the midnight lake,
Cheeks like lotus petals, beauty for beauty's sake.
Yet tales spoke of Buddha's disdain for mere grace,
So, she kept her distance from his sage embrace.

One morning, cool and crisp, she ventured near,
To the Bamboo Grove, a place the king held dear.
Squirrels and shadows, in the fruit trees' embrace,
Jasmine whispers, woven into the space.

A voice, a melody, echoed through the hall,
A voice that stirred, like dawn's melodious call.
Warm, relaxed, with love profound,
Buddha's words, a wisdom profound.

In the back she sat, veiled in her own guise,
Little knowing, Buddha saw through her disguise.
With psychic might, he wove an image rare,
A young maiden, beauty beyond compare.

Khema, enraptured, admired the illusion's grace,
Perfect in complexion, like springtime's face.
But the illusion shifted, a twist in the rhyme,
From youth to age, in the span of no time.

In the nun's sacred circle, insight profound,
Khema, a queen, her journey unbound.
Wisdom's beacon in the silent domain,
A sovereign nun, in Dharma's reign.

7. The Buddha and the Millionaire

In ancient realms where legends thrived,
A millionaire, Anathapindika, arrived.
Born as Sadaria, his name now rings,
"Feeder of the helpless," generosity springs.

He sought a park, a grand estate,
For Buddha's dwelling, a sacred fate.
Prince Jeta, owner, reluctant to share,
Anathapindika's resolve declared.

Gold coins like leaves adorned the land,
A tempting sight, a fortune grand.
The park was his, the prince acquiesced,
Jetavana Monastery, in bliss, was dressed.

Twenty-four seasons, a tranquil abode,
The Buddha's teachings in wisdom bestowed.
Anathapindika, with heartfelt glee,
Built a haven for truth, a spiritual sea.

Discourses echoed 'neath the monastery dome,
Wisdom shared, creating a sacred home.
For laypeople, the Buddha spoke clear,
Of generosity and bliss to revere.

Generosity, the first step proclaimed,
Alms to monks, virtuous paths framed.
Yet, beyond this noble, giving feat,
Lies refuge in the Triple Gem, complete.

Five Precepts stand, disciplines in the light,
Guiding words and deeds, a virtuous flight.
Above them shines meditation's grace,
Loving-kindness, a transformative embrace.

Meritorious acts, a grand design,
Insight unfolds, in the fleeting line.
Anathapindika, an ardent disciple true,
Received these teachings, wisdom to imbue.

Four kinds of bliss, the layman's delight,
Ownership's joy, wealth shining bright.
Debtless satisfaction, blameless glee,
Wealthy virtues, a radiant decree.

When paths entwined at Sitavana's shade,
Anathapindika's confidence displayed.
An aura glowed, a sotapanna born,
First stage of sainthood, in wisdom sworn.

In tales of old, a millionaire's tale,
Anathapindika's generosity set sail.
Jetavana's sanctuary, where teachings unfold,
In timeless verses, a narrative told.

8. The Buddha and the Farmer

In Ekanala's village, where rivers flow,
Buddha walked where dewdrops glow.
Magadha's soil, freshly tilled and wet,
Fields ready for planting, a scene to be met.

Kasibharadvaja, a Brahmin bold,
In the early morn, his story unfolds.
Five hundred ploughs, a farmer's domain,

A humble Brahmin, cultivating grain.

As the Blessed One stood in quiet grace,
Time for alms food in this tranquil place.
The Brahmin approached, a sneer on his face,
Mocking the sage with words to trace.

"I toil the soil, I sow and I reap,
From ploughing the land, my sustenance I keep.
Ascetic, why not share the toil,
Plough and sow, break free from coil."

In response, Buddha's voice serene,
"I too plough, unseen, yet keen.
Seeds of faith, my sowing art,
Discipline, the rain, to each true heart.

Wisdom, yoke, and plough I wield,
Modesty, my plough-head, my field.
Mind the rope, mindfulness my guide,
In deeds, in words, in food, I abide.

Truthfulness, the weeding tool,
Freedom from suffering, the blissful rule.
Perseverance bears the yoke,
Nirvana's path, where chains are broke.

I've ploughed the fields of consciousness,
Sowed the seeds of righteousness.
Fruits of immortality, my yield,
Escaping suffering, my plough revealed."

Brahmin, once puzzled, now in awe,
Realizing the truth the sage foresaw.
"Venerable Gotama, plougher of the soul,
Bear Deathlessness, let your crops unroll."

Acknowledging the wisdom shared,
Brahmin offered milk-rice, deeply cared.

Buddha, in humility, the food declined,
Teaching's worth, no worldly gain bind.

At the feet of Buddha, Brahmin fell,
Desiring ordainment, a monk to dwell.
Kasibharadvaja, now arahant named,
In enlightenment's light, forever framed.

9. The Magandiya's Grudge

In realms where beauty's sought like treasure rare,
Lived Magandiya, beyond compare.
Men of wealth yearned to claim her hand,
Yet her Brahmin parents had not found a match grand.

The Buddha, sage with tranquil eyes,
Surveyed the world with wisdom-wise.
Noticed the Brahmin's spiritual grace,
A chance to enlighten, a pivotal place.

To the fire sacrifice, the Buddha moved,
As Magandiya's father's heart was proved.
"Wondrous monk, stay, don't depart,"
A match divine, the Brahmin's heart.

Silent stood the Buddha, a mark left behind,
A footprint imprinted, a message to find.
Rushed the Brahmin, joy on his face,
"My daughter's match, a celestial grace."

Yet the Buddha spoke not, just left a sign,
A footprint profound, a silent design.
The Brahmin, eager, rushed to his kin,
"Prepare our daughter, a match seen within."

The family returned to the sacred ground,

But the Buddha, nowhere to be found.
Only a footprint, imprinted in the earth,
A silent answer, an eloquent rebirth.

The wife, versed in signs, began to read,
Not a match for our daughter, indeed.
A renouncer's mark, she wisely perceived,
Worldly ties, he had long ago cleaved.

Dismissing her insight, the Brahmin insisted,
His judgment clouded, perception resisted.
The Buddha sat, a sight so divine,
A perfect match, the Brahmin opined.

Offering his daughter, the Brahmin exclaimed,
"I give her to you, in marriage named."
But the Buddha declined, desires he'd quell,
Worldly pleasures, he would dispel.

Explaining his path, renouncing delights,
He spoke of the struggles and sleepless nights.
Magandiya, proud, her beauty misplaced,
Perceived insult, her heart embraced.

Wed to a king, power in her hand,
Yet hatred for Buddha, like shifting sand.
Instigating crowds, a malicious crusade,
To insult the Buddha, in her heart, vengeance laid.

Ananda, disheartened, wanted to flee,
Endure not insults, but Buddha decreed,
"Endure, dear Ananda, as the elephant in the fray,
Arrows of abuse, I'll face and sway."

Buddha's power, a calming force,
Insults subsided, as a matter of course.

In Udena's city, they stood tall,
Tolerance prevailed, and hatred did fall.

10. Alavaka the Demon

In the shadows of Alavi, where darkness held its sway,
Lurked Alavaka, demon fierce, in the forest gray.
Feasting on human flesh, his terror well-known,
A creature of power, in a realm of his own.

The King of Alavi, a victim ensnared,
Caught in the demon's grasp, his fate declared.
A deal struck in desperation, a pact with dread,
Daily offerings sent, a kingdom misled.

From palace dungeons, to the forest, they'd tread,
With plates of rice, and hearts full of dread.
A mission so simple, or so they were told,
Yet none returned, a mystery unfold.

The city in despair, the prison forlorn,
The king's desperate plight, in shadows borne.
Advice sought, a sinister plan in the air,
Gold packets dropped, a city ensnared.

No one dared to touch, the gold in the street,
A city in silence, a perilous defeat.
Children, the last resort, the desperate decree,
The king's son left, in solemnity.

Near Alavi's city, the Buddha, divine,

With the gaze of compassion, his eyes did shine.
Through the Divine Eye, the unfolding plight,
A journey embarked, to set things right.

To Alavaka's cave, the Buddha arrived,
At the demon's abode, compassion revived.
Gatekeeper encountered, a request in disguise,
A night at the cave, under otherworldly skies.

Within the cave's depths, the Buddha sat,
Teaching the Dharma, where the demon spat.
A thunderstorm brewed, a demon's roar,
But the Buddha, unshaken, at the cave's core.

Weapons hurled, a spear and club,
Fell at Buddha's feet, a divine snub.
Alavaka, frustrated, tried a different ploy,
Accusing the Buddha, his calm to destroy.

"Ascetic, why sit with another man's wives?
In the owner's absence, who connives?"
The Buddha rose, with serene might,
Unfazed by Alavaka's futile fight.

Thrice he commanded, the Buddha obeyed,
A mind unyielding, as the demon swayed.
The fourth time came, a resolute stand,
"I stay," declared the Buddha, firm and grand.

Questions posed, a demon's test,
Clever queries from Alavaka's chest.
Gold leaves of wisdom, a legacy's trace,
Answered by Buddha, in divine grace.

"Confidence, the greatest wealth one can find,
True doctrine brings bliss, a mastermind.
Sweetest taste, in truth it lies,
Wise living, the best life implies."

Alavaka pondered, his demons dispersed,
More questions asked, as wisdom immersed.
Passing to the next world, how to be free?
With virtues adorned, the answer, a decree.

Truthfulness, morals, courage, and charity,
A roadmap to peace, a path to clarity.
Alavaka, transformed, a disciple devout,
From demon to seeker, the Buddha's wisdom sprout.

The officers astonished, the king's son retrieved,
A scene transformed, a tale believed.
Alavaka, once a creature untamed,
Now bowed before the Buddha, his soul reclaimed.

11. Sujata and the Seven Types of Wives

In the mansion of Anathapindika, strife took root,
Sujata, a wife, with arrogance to boot.
From wealth she hailed, wedded to noble kin,
Yet, discord brewed, a tempest within.

The Buddha, drawn by the house's uproar,
Inquired of the turmoil at Anathapindika's door.
A daughter-in-law, the source of disarray,
Sujata, defiant, heedless in her sway.

Anathapindika, burdened with the daily fight,
Lamented her disrespect, a constant blight.

To the troubled house, the Buddha turned his face,
A gentle inquiry, seeking truth and grace.

Sujata summoned, the Buddha spoke with care,
"Seven types of wives, which role do you bear?"
Her curiosity piqued, she sought to learn,
The categories defined, a woman's turn.

"Bad and undesirable, troublesome and unkind,
A wicked soul, pitiless, to her husband blind.
Like a thief, she squanders wealth with delight,
A master she becomes, in selfishness and spite."

"In contrast, the good, praiseworthy in their art,
A wife as a mother, with compassion at heart.
A sister in demeanor, respect in her gaze,
A friend so loyal, in noble virtue, she stays."

"Or as a handmaid, understanding in her stance,
Accepting critique with a tranquil glance.
Obedient and calm, amidst harsh words she'll be,
Which of these, Sujata, do you wish to see?"

A mirror to her soul, the options laid bare,
Sujata pondered, awakened to her err.
Ashamed of her past, repentance in her voice,
"I aspire to the last, let my heart rejoice."

Transformed was Sujata, from discord to peace,
A shift in her being, a strife's release.
No longer defiant, she embraced a new role,

Her husband's ally, on the path to the soul.

A journey commenced, toward enlightenment's glow,
Hand in hand, the couple's bond did grow.
In the tranquil halls of Anathapindika's abode,
Harmony restored, on the righteous road.

12. Ananda the Loyal Attendant

In the dawn of Buddha's ministry, no aide stood near,
Monks, in turn, assisted, with robes and bowls to bear.
Nagasamala, Nagita, and others in the fray,
Yet, they faltered, disobedient, a wanderer's astray.

One monk, Nagasamala, in defiance chose,
A different path, led by desires, woes.
At the crossroads, deviating from the sage's word,
Highway robbers struck, his disobedience incurred.

In Jantu's village, Meghiya sought a grove,
To practice asceticism, his mind to prove.
Thrice warned by Buddha, yet the path he chose,
Evil thoughts entwined, a trial of woes.

Arriving at Jetavana, the Buddha proclaimed,
"Old now, I seek one, loyal and untamed.
Choose from among, a disciple ever near,
To heed my call, my whispers to hear."

Sariputta and Moggallana offered hands,
Yet, their roles elsewhere, destined for other lands.
Ananda, silent, patient in his wait,
Others urged him forth, to step before the gate.

Buddha's words, "Ananda serves, of his own accord,"
Eight conditions set, in service of the Lord:
Robes and food, his own to bear,
Sleep apart, with solitude to share.

In Fragrant Chamber, he won't find repose,
Invitations, he'll decline, where Buddha goes.
But the Buddha, with grace, consented to his plea,
Ananda, loyal aide, in service would be.

Twenty-five years, the bond did hold,
Ananda's care, a tale of legends told.
Cousin to the Buddha, devoted and true,
His service unwavering, skies of azure hue.

Day and night, by Buddha's side,
Ananda's vigil, a sacred guide.
Patrolling sleep, in shadows deep,
His loyalty, a promise to keep.

The Buddha, praising, Ananda's skill,
Learned, mindful, and with a steadfast will.
A vital role in nunhood's birth,
Ananda, nurturing, a legacy's girth.

Ananda bodhi tree, in memory stands,
Near Jetavana, rooted in sacred lands.
Yet, arahantship eluded his grasp,
Even as Buddha's teachings did clasp.

Ananda's life, a century and two,
An epic tale, woven through and through.
In loyalty and service, he found his fame,
Ananda, forever, linked to Buddha's name.

13. The Tragedy of King Bimbisara

In the kingdom of Bimbisara, shadows darkly crept,
A tragedy unfolded, secrets closely kept.
Ajatasattu, the prince, swayed by Devadatta's song,
A sinister plot, a father's fate went wrong.

Under the silent moon, a son with a knife concealed,
Crept to the chamber where his sleeping father kneeled.
Yet the guards were vigilant, the plot unveiled,
King Bimbisara's life, in jeopardy, entailed.

King Bimbisara, kind and wise, saw beyond the strife,
"Step down," he thought, to grant his son a peaceful life.
A sacrificial move, a father's love profound,
Instead of retribution, a throne to him, he crowned.

But the son, ungrateful, power-hungry, and cruel,
Betrayed his father, a heart as hard as fuel.
Into a dungeon cold, his father was confined,

In shadows, justice faltered, cruelty intertwined.

Queen Vaidehi, loyal, in secret did provide,
Hidden food to Bimbisara, love undenied.
Her cunning saved the king, though darkness loomed,
A dance with death, in secret rooms, consumed.

But Ajatasattu, blind in his thirst for might,
Blocked the queen's devotion, plunging into night.
No food, no solace, the king was left to starve,
A tragic tale of filial ties, a fate so harsh.

Days lingered, hope waned, the king refused to fall,
Ajatasattu, impatient, his patience wore so small.
"Call the barber!" echoed through the palace hall,
A father's agony, the son did now install.

Hope sparkled in Bimbisara's tear-filled eyes,
A barber, a savior, a chance to break the ties.
Yet, cruel fate had woven, a tragic enterprise,
His feet, with razor cut, on burning coals, the king denies.

In anguish, King Bimbisara, a father true,
Succumbed to pain, a life he bid adieu.
The son, once blind, now weeping, tears anew,
A realization dawned, love's colors in full view.

News reached Ajatasattu, his son was born,

Joy danced in his heart, a father's pride adorn.
Yet, in his mother's words, a truth was torn,
His father's love, an unspoken, silent morn.

His mother's revelation, a poignant, painful art,
A father's sacrifice, played in every part.
Blood and pus, a father's love impart,
In death's embrace, love echoed, a broken heart.

Choked with tears, Ajatasattu pleaded, begged,
"Release my father," a soul-wrenching pledge.
But silence answered, in sorrow, he was draped,
A son's repentance, too late, the ties had snapped.

A father's love, a son discovered late,
In the echo of remorse, a cruel twist of fate.
Bimbisara, reborn, at Heaven's gate,
A deva's sigh, a tragic tale, sealed in fate.

14. King Pasenadi of Kosala Learns the Pain of Love

In the realm of Kosala, where kings held their sway,
King Pasenadi ruled, where Savaṭṭhi lay.
A loyal disciple of the Buddha profound,
With Mallika, his queen, wise and Dharma-bound.

Inquiring of the Buddha, young in his sight,
The king sought wisdom, seeking truth's light.
"Master Gotama, how can one so young,

Claim full enlightenment, on Dharma's tongue?"

The Buddha, serene, explained in reply,
The youth of a monk, a truth to apply.
A warrior, serpent, fire, and bhikkhu too,
In youth, may bear wisdom, noble and true.

Pasenadi, convinced by the Buddha's voice,
A loyal follower, he made the wise choice.
Advising the king, in matters of the heart,
Of daughters' worth, a lesson to impart.

When news arrived, a daughter had been born,
Displeasure in the king, for a son was sworn.
But Buddha spoke of women, wise and good,
Who birth mighty sons, from motherhood.

The dear ones we cherish, the Buddha proclaimed,
Bring sorrow and pain, by love's tie framed.
Seeking the truth, Mallika inquired,
From a Brahmin's tales, the truth required.

Approaching the king, she questioned his stand,
"If misfortune befell our daughter so grand,
Would sorrow not follow, lament, and despair?
As the Buddha has said, in wisdom rare."

King Pasenadi, his love unconfined,
Admitted with honesty, to truths he'd bind.
"If harm came to her, sorrow would find,
Lament and despair, in my heart entwined."

Understanding dawned, the lesson profound,
Dear ones we love, in sorrow are bound.
The Princess Vajira, cherished and dear,
An example for truth, for all to revere.

In battles of kings, where the victors fall,
Neither peace nor solace, on triumph's call.
For victory breeds hatred, pain on defeat,
True peace is found when both foes cease to compete.

Later, King Kosala, in battles strife,
Against his own kin, the tumult of life.
Capturing his nephew, Ajatasattu by name,
The Buddha foresaw, in the war's cruel game.

Possessions held dear, the spoils of the fight,
Would churn the wheel of deeds, in the eternal night.
Plunder and be plundered, the cycle profound,
A truth echoed through time, in war's haunting sound.

King Pasenadi, in his eightieth year,
Faced a revolt, a challenge severe.
His son Vidudabha, rebellion in his heart,
The king faced his fate, his life to depart.

15. King Pasenadi Learns to See True Character

In the realm of Kosala, when evening's embrace,
King Pasenadi met the Buddha's grace.
Along the road, a band of ascetics passed,
With knotted hair and bodies so unmasked.

Their nails were long, their pace was slow,
Heads bowed low, a demeanor to show.
The king, in awe, arose to worship them,
Uttering his name, a sacred hymn.

But the Buddha, with eyes divinely keen,
Saw beyond the guise, the truth unseen.
These were not saints in ascetic guise,
But spies, with cunning, veiled in disguise.

Returning to Buddha, the king declared,
"Sages, indeed, their presence bared.
In tranquil stride, with bowed heads they tread,
A sight that speaks, their virtues widespread."

The Buddha, with wisdom, then addressed,
Majestic king, his thoughts impressed.
"By mere appearance, one cannot know,
A person's essence, a hidden show.

"To fathom true character, keenness is required,
Associate, observe, till truth is acquired.
In conversation, purity unveiled,
In misfortune, courage not curtailed.

"Wisdom revealed in discussions grand,
The true nature of each woman and man.
For some, in virtue, a guise they wear,
Deceptive masks, their true selves rare.

"So judge not swiftly, O noble king,
The cloak may deceive, true nature may cling.
In the theatre of life, with roles to play,
Discern the players, the masks they lay."

King Pasenadi, enlightened by the sage,
Embraced the wisdom, the words on that page.
To see beyond semblance, to judge with care,
In life's grand drama, the truth laid bare.

16. An Attempt to Discredit the Buddha

In the twentieth year, when the Buddha's light shone,
Two events unfolded, tales to be known.
First, Angulimala, the bandit turned serene,
The second, a plot by jealousy unseen.

In Savatthi's realm, the Buddha held sway,
His teachings embraced, a radiant display.
Yet, amidst the followers, whispers of spite,
Ascetics envious, shadows of the light.

Not all in Savatthi bowed to the sage,
Ascetics in rivalry, fueled by outrage.
Jealous of alms and robes bestowed,
They sought to tarnish the Buddha's abode.

A wandering ascetic, Sundari by name,
Young in years, her character aflame.
They approached her with a sinister plea,
To sully the Buddha, to mar his decree.

"Sundari, unveil the secrets concealed,
Spy on the Buddha, let his fate be revealed."
Unaware of the malice, the ascetics' deceit,
She tread to Jeta's Grove, a perilous feat.

As time unfolded, the ascetics grew sure,
Sundari's visits, a motive impure.
In wicked hands, she met her demise,
Buried in a ditch, under treacherous skies.

To the king they went, a tale to be spun,
Sundari missing, their wicked deed done.
Blaming the Buddha for the misdeed,

Accusations vile, a dark, fabricated creed.

King Pasenadi, distressed and concerned,
Sent them to search, Sundari discerned.
A mock search, a staged charade,
The ascetics dug her up, their falsehood displayed.

Through Savatthi's streets, they carried her bier,
Shouting aloud for all to hear.
"See the monks, their hypocrisy unveiled,
Shameless and wicked, innocence curtailed."

The disciples trembled, fear in their gaze,
Accusations flew, a tempest ablaze.
But the Buddha, serene in wisdom untold,
Spoke words of solace, courage to uphold.

"People may scold and accusations fly,
Endure with calmness, let patience be thy.
Within seven days, the storm will subside,
In innocence, our virtue will confide."

The disciples, steadfast, followed the guide,
Reciting the words, in patience, they bide.
As the days unfolded, the truth came to light,
Innocence prevailed, dispelling the night.

The very accusers, the perpetrators revealed,
Confessed their crime, their fate now sealed.
The Buddha's light, now brighter than before,
In Savatthi, reverence forevermore.

17. He Worshipped in All Directions

In the realm of Rajagaha, where the Bamboo Grove stood,
The Buddha, a sage, walked in tranquil mood.
His alms round led him to a sight profound,
A youth named Sigala, in reverence bound.

Drenched as if from a recent bath he'd come,
Bowing in each direction, not a mere custom.
To the East, South, West, and North, he'd bend,
Skyward and earthward, devotion to extend.

Inquired the Buddha of this ritual grand,
Sigala, the youth, with reverence at hand,
Revealed his father's last wish, a sacred plea,
To worship in all directions, a legacy.

"My father's counsel, his parting decree,
To keep evil at bay, from all directions free.
But, Buddha, I wonder, what does it mean?"
Inquired the youth with eyes serene.

The Buddha pondered and then began,
To unravel the truths of a fatherly plan.
"Not a literal bow, but virtues to uphold,
Each direction a lesson, a story to be told."

"Worship the East, where dawn's light does gleam,
Respect and honor, let filial love beam.
To the South, bow low, for teachers hold,
Obedience and respect, in wisdom unfold.

The West, be faithful, devoted and true,
To the partner in life, a sacred view.
To the North, let kindness and charity flow,
To friends and kin, let compassion grow.

The sky above, a higher decree,
Support the seekers, the devotees be.
Earth beneath, in fairness stand,
To servants provide a caring hand."

"Four evils to shun," the Buddha decreed,
"Killing, stealing, false love, and lies that mislead.
Avoid partiality, enmity's bitter fruits,
Foolishness and fear, evils to refute.

Six ways to save one's wealth," he continued,
"Abstain from intoxicants, with wisdom imbued.
Avoid late-night wandering, fairs' allure,
Gambling's deceit, and friends impure.
Laziness, a foe, let it not tether,
These wealth-wasting paths, shun altogether."

As Sigala listened, his heart transformed,
A realization within, his essence warmed.
His father's teachings, now clear and bright,
Illuminated by the Buddha's guiding light.

Confessions spilled, Sigala's soul laid bare,
Excuses to listen, he no longer would wear.
"Accept me, O Buddha," he fervently pled,
"I'll follow your teachings, where virtue is bred."

The Buddha, in kindness, embraced the youth,
Transforming ignorance into wisdom, a truth.
Sigala, now a disciple, his path refined,
In the Dharma's embrace, his heart enshrined.

18. Ambapali's Gift

In Vesali's realm, where stories unfold,
A lady, Ambapali, her tale is told.
Persons of all castes, seeking the sage,
Gathered around, a diverse pilgrimage.

Golden as the sun, she rose from the sea,
A beauty adorned in captivating glee.
Yet her heart, in shadows, wandered lost,
Till her servant spoke of a truth to accost.

"All have flocked to the Garden of Mangoes,
Drawn by a man, his wisdom outflows.
A king's son who his realm did forsake,
Seeking Truth divine, a journey to undertake."

With newfound curiosity, she seized the reins,
A coach, swift steeds, breaking earthly
chains.
Through palms and mango trees, the garden she
trod,
Silent leaves bore witness to the approaching
god.

Amidst tall trees, in deep shadows seated,
A radiant aura, his presence completed.
Ambapali, her beauty cast aside,
Her heart, like a river, in tears did confide.

Forgotten was she, forgotten her grace,
For in the Buddha's presence, a sacred space.
Falling before him, face to the earth,
A soul transformed, a spiritual rebirth.

The Buddha spoke, his words like rain,
Ears parched, drank the wisdom, a soul's gain.
Ambapali, humbled, at his feet,

Invited the Buddha, a meal to greet.

Nobles of Vesali, a proposition they made,
For great weights of gold, the bargain
displayed.
Ambapali's reply, with joy did she say,
"Even Vesali, I would not trade away."

In anger, they approached the sage revered,
Requested the honor, but the Buddha steered.
Ambapali's offering, he graciously embraced,
Sweet milk-rice and cake, a meal retraced.

The garden, she presented with humility rare,
The Buddha accepted, purity laid bare.
With Dharma's grace, her heart transformed,
A virtuous woman, a life conformed.

Though mired in immorality's past,
Ambapali, her sins surpassed.
Like the lotus, from murky mud to rise,
Spiritual heights, her soul defies.

The Buddha and disciples, a village sought,
Beluva awaited, where lessons were taught.
In the imminent rain, their refuge they'd
find,
A rainy season, in Beluva, entwined.

19. Jivaka the Buddha's Doctor

In ancient India's time, where legends unfold,
A tale of Jivaka, the physician bold.
Born to a courtesan, cast away, forlorn,
Destiny intervened on a fateful morn.

On a rubbish heap, in a wooden case,
A discarded babe, a pitiful embrace.
Prince Abhaya, noble and just,
Found the child, a bond to trust.

Compassion stirred, a princely decree,
To raise the foundling, a son to be.
Jivaka, nurtured in royalty's keep,
Found solace in a cradle, no longer steep.

Seven years of study, a healer's quest,
Under a master, he'd undergo the test.
As fame embraced his surgeon's art,
Kings sought his skills, a life to restart.

King Bimbisara, the royal name,
Sought Jivaka's aid, his acclaim.
But amid the illustrious, a joy profound,
Attending the Buddha, virtues unbound.

Devadatta's malice, a rock's cruel fall,
Injured the Buddha, at Jivaka's call.
The healer's hands, a touch divine,
Restored the feet, the sacred shrine.

Monastic dreams in a mango grove,
Jivaka's heart, a haven wove.
A monastery rose, 'neath the sacred tree,
Home for the Buddha, a sanctuary free.

Three times a day, with joy and grace,
Jivaka served, his rightful place.
A healing touch, a sainthood's bloom,
In his mango garden, dispelling gloom.

When Ajatasattu sought truth's embrace,
Jivaka guided, to a sacred space.
A meeting arranged, with the Buddha revered,
The king transformed, his path cleared.

Despite a dark past, a father slain,
Under Devadatta's sinister reign.
Ajatasattu found wisdom's call,
Supported the Council, after Buddha's fall.

In the tapestry of time, where stories unfold,
Jivaka's saga, a narrative bold.
Physician, sage, in virtue refined,
A healer's heart, in history enshrined.

20. The Quarrel at Kosambi

In Kosambi's ancient halls, where whispers stirred the air,
A rift among the monks, a quarrel fierce and rare.
The wise in Vinaya clashed with teachings deep,
A feud consuming peace, as harmony took a leap.

The Buddha, in his wisdom, sought to mend the fray,
But efforts proved in vain, as tensions held their sway.
With silent grace, he took his bowl and robes so few,
Retreating to Paileyyaka, where tranquil forests grew.

Within the woods, a haven found, a stone cave stood alone,
An elephant, a gentle soul, made this sacred space his own.
Each day he brought offerings, fruits of forest's embrace,

An ode to silent reverence, a majestic, gentle grace.

Amid the woods, a monkey danced, a nimble, playful sprite,
Watching the pachyderm's devotion, he felt a pure delight.
A honeycomb, a sweet offering, he brought to the serene scene,
In the heart of nature's chapel, where harmony convenes.

In Kosambi's city walls, the news did swiftly spread,
The Buddha, in the forest deeps, alone his path did tread.
A consequence unfolded, a tale of loss and strife,
The alms stopped flowing, severed ties with monastic life.

At Savatthi, Ananda heard, the plea from distant lands,
The Buddha must return, where harmony demands.
He spoke of eager hearts, yearning for wisdom's stream,
The call of Savatthi, an echo in a tranquil dream.

The Buddha, moved by love, for people far and wide,
Agreed to end his solitude, his forest dwelling guide.
With grace, he journeyed back, where alms had ceased to pour,
To Savatthi's awaiting hearts, hungering for spiritual lore.

The monks, who once in discord, sought the Buddha's feet,
In humility they approached, seeking mercy sweet.
The quarrel at Kosambi, a painful, bitter stain,
Yet forgiveness flowed, as the Buddha eased their pain.

In words profound, a sermon rose, from wisdom's sacred well,
"Choose the wise as companions," the Buddha gently quelled.
"Better solitude with virtue, than with folly's kin,
For there's no companionship, where the foolish shadows spin."

Through forest depths and city's hum, the Buddha's wisdom spread,
A timeless tale of quarrel's end, where forgiveness softly tread.
In Savatthi's embrace, a tranquil river flowed,
And the Dharma's sacred whispers in harmony bestowed.

21. The Buddha's Attitude Towards Other Religious Teachers

In the ancient days when spirits stirred the air,
A millionaire named Upali, with wealth beyond compare.

A pupil of Nathaputta, a teacher with his own creed,
Divergent from the Buddha, in thought and sacred deed.

A master in debates, Upali stood with pride,
Challenged by his teacher, in wisdom to confide.
To question the law of karma, intricate and vast,
The Buddha, serene and wise, engaged in truth to cast.

Amidst the dialogue, a dance of words and thought,
The Buddha's wisdom flowing, like rivers finely wrought.
With patience and with clarity, he dismantled false belief,
Convincing Upali, the truth beyond the veil of grief.

Impressed by Buddha's teaching, with openness in mind,
Upali sought to follow, leaving past doctrines behind.
But Buddha, in his wisdom, cautious words did share,
"Examine with due diligence, let not emotions snare.

"Fame surrounds your name, a path not lightly tread,
Investigate my teachings, thoughts within your head.
Not for fleeting pleasure, or in the heat of the acclaim,
But with a mindful spirit, let reason be your flame."

Upali, pleased and moved, by Buddha's call to ponder,
"I shall reflect with care, your teachings I will wander.
Unlike others who would seize, in triumph and parade,
I seek a deeper truth, the essence to pervade."

Acceptance granted by the sage, a follower gained anew,
Yet Buddha spoke with kindness, advice to Upali strew.
"Tolerance and compassion, virtues to uphold,
To former teachers, alms and care, let your kindness unfold."

In the annals of Buddhism, a clean and noble stand,
No fanaticism's force, no blood upon the land.
Spread through peace and beauty, goodwill to every door,
A legacy of wisdom, through ages evermore.

This Upali, not the monk renowned in Vinaya's lore,
A tale of transformation, from riches to wisdom's core.
Inquiry, tolerance, the Buddha's guiding light,
A beacon for the seeker, through the tranquil night.

22 The Monk Who Tried Too Hard

In Rajagaha's embrace, where Vultures' Peak did rise,
Lived Sona, son of wealth, delighting in lute's sweet cries.
His skin, as tender as the dawn's first light,
A tale of richness, softness, in every step so light.

Brought afore King Bimbisara, whispers of his fame,
Hair upon his soles, a peculiarity, an unusual claim.
Near Vultures' Peak, the Buddha's dwelling ground,
A discourse on happiness, in detachment to be found.

Sona, swayed by these words, sought the monk's attire,
To tread the path of mindfulness, quench the world's desire.
Ordained, he walked in fervor, each step a prayer,
Meditating ceaselessly, the sacred path to wear.

To and fro, within the monastery's serene expanse,
His spirit aflame, in contemplation's dance.
Yet blisters bloomed, and his feet bled,
Striving for happiness, on pain's path he tread.

Pain and disappointment, his constant companion,
Craving's ghost lingered, a relentless union.
"It is no use," sighed Sona, in despair's embrace,
"I must return to lay life, worldly pleasures to retrace."

The Buddha, sage and knowing, heard of Sona's plight,
Went to him gently, to guide him to the light.
"Sona," he spoke, "I sense your inner strife,
Would you stay, and understand the nuances of life?"

"Yes, Lord," replied Sona, in hope's flickering flame,
Ready to listen, to learn, to transcend the blame.
"Imagine, Sona, the lute, in music's grandeur lies,
Tuned just right, neither taut nor otherwise.

"When the strings are tightly drawn,
No music emerges, just silence withdrawn.
And when the strings hang loose and frail,
Again, no music, a mournful, muted tale.

"Your practice, Sona, akin to the lute's sweet song,
Neither strained nor slack, the balance to prolong.
In relaxed meditation, find your middle ground,
A path not too tight, nor too loosely bound."

Sona, in understanding, absorbed the sage's lore,
In the monastery's haven, he sought once more.

A monk in repose, not straining to impress,
He walked the path, a dance of mindfulness.

In the embrace of tranquility, Sona found his way,
Achieving sainthood, in the light of a new day.
The music of enlightenment, in each step, did resound,
A melody of balance, in the monastery profound.

23. The Order of Nuns

In Vesali's shadow, where whispers of wisdom sway,
The Buddha, on hearing, his father's health dismayed,
To Kapilavatthu, a journey long and steep,
To teach the Dharma, where love and truth shall seep.

King Suddhodana, his father, ailing and frail,
Seeking solace in teachings, a spiritual trail.
Arahantship he embraced, enlightened in the end,
Seven days of peace, as the Dharma did transcend.

In this fifth year, a tale of significance unfolds,
Maha Pajapati Gotami, with determination bold.
Aunt and foster mother, seeking the monastic way,
Three times she pled, to join the Sangha's sway.

Yet thrice denied, the Buddha's reasons untold,
A woman's entry, a tradition's stronghold.
Undeterred, Gotami devised a steadfast plan,
To Vesali she marched, a determined caravan.

She cut her hair, donned yellow, a symbol clear,
With Sakyan ladies, she journeyed, devoid of fear.
150 miles of dust and swollen feet,
At Vesali's gates, her resolve did meet.

Outside the hall, where the Buddha held his stay,
Tears on her face, as her plea did sway.
Ananda, surprised by this determined sight,
"Gotami, why stand you here, veiled in plight?"

"The Blessed One," she wept, "denies our plea,
To join the order, a nun's sacred decree."
"I'll ask the Buddha," Ananda declared,
To explore the reasons, the truths laid bare.

Thrice asked, thrice denied, Gotami stood firm,
Ananda, persistence, the truths to confirm.
"Can women, Lord, in sainthood's grace partake?"
"They can," the Buddha affirmed, the barriers to break.

"Then, Lord, let women join this noble quest,
As nuns, in piety, let them be blessed."
"If Gotami, Ananda, accepts the Eight Conditions true,
A nun she shall be, the path she must pursue."

Conditions laid, Gotami embraced,
A nun's journey, her destiny traced.
Arahantship's bloom, her soul did adorn,
Others who followed, in enlightenment reborn.

An order of nuns, in the Buddha's grand decree,
A historic moment, for womankind to be free.
No higher honor, in the world's great sweep,
Buddha's gift, a sanctuary, where women's spirits leap.

24. The Buddha on the Caste System

In ancient realms where shadows danced,
The caste's cruel grip, India's circumstance.
A rigid order, society's decree,
Birth, a sentence, no hope to be free.

Brahmins, the priests, the highest claim,
Warriors, merchants, each a different name.
Untouchables, the lowest, condemned and bound,
For menial tasks, their fate was found.

The Buddha rose, a voice profound,
Against the caste, injustice unbound.
No birth should shackle, no station define,
A soul's worth measured by deeds divine.

"Within each caste, both cruel and kind,
Evil and virtue in every mind.
No birthright stain, no virtue held fast,
It's deeds alone that create our caste."

Discarding chains of birthright's chain,
The Buddha's words, a thunderous reign.

A call for equality, morality's grace,
A seismic shift, a transformative embrace.

He challenged norms, with wisdom's spear,
Striking down prejudices, drawing near.
For deeds alone should mark a man,
His worth defined by a virtuous plan.

The Brahmin's pride, the warrior's might,
The trader's riches, the untouchable's plight,
All mere shadows in the moral light,
As the Buddha spoke of justice so bright.

A revolution, a seismic roar,
Equality's anthem, forevermore.
No more untouchables, no slaves in chains,
Only the echo of compassion remains.

"By birth, no outcaste, no Brahmin true,
Deeds sculpt the caste, life's vibrant hue.
Judge not by lineage, nor birthright's tale,
Let deeds prevail, let morality sail."

In this sacred stance, a society rebuilt,
A foundation of justice, on which to tilt.
The Buddha's vision, a timeless guide,
Morality and equality side by side.

Centuries passed, the echo endured,
Buddha's wisdom, an anthem assured.
A call to break the chains that bind,
A call for equality, for all mankind.

25. The Mirror of the Dharma

In ancient days, through realms they tread,

The Buddha and disciples, their wisdom spread.
From Rajagaha's embrace, a journey begun,
To the north, they ventured, towards the
setting sun.

In Nadika's village, where the Brick Hall
stood,
Monks and devotees, their souls pursued.
Passing away, a question arose,
Ananda sought answers, the future enclosed.

"Tell me, O Buddha, of those passed away,
Their fate in the realms, where do they sway?"
The Buddha, in calmness, his words unfurled,
Revealing the truths that lie in the other
world.

"Practicing my teachings, each noble soul,
Has found a refuge, a heavenly goal.
Attaining stages of sainthood's light,
In the Dharma's embrace, their spirits
alight."

Ananda persisted, "Yet, with each soul's
flight,
Shall we inquire of their future's light?"
The Buddha, compassion in his gaze,
Offered a discourse, a guiding blaze.

"The Mirror of Dharma, a truth profound,
A noble disciple, in confidence bound.
In Buddha, Dharma, Sangha, absolute trust,
Reflecting on virtues, a soul's inner thrust.

Contemplating the Triple Gem's grace,
Developing qualities, a radiant embrace.
The mind concentrated, in power refined,
Sotapanna attained, a liberated mind.

This mirror, O Ananda, a crystal clear view,
Predicts a path, noble and true.
No lower realms, no sorrowful states,
A sotapanna's destiny, the dharma narrates."

Vesali awaited, with whispers of the wind,
The Buddha and disciples, a journey thinned.
Through cities and villages, the teachings
unfurled,
The Mirror of Dharma, a beacon in the world.

In the silent echoes of Nadika's lore,
The Buddha's wisdom, a resounding roar.
The journey continued, tales yet to unfold,
In Vesali's embrace, new stories to be told.

26. The Buddha's Attitude to Miracles

In the sacred groves of Nalanda fair,
Where whispers of enlightenment fill the air,
A man named Kevaddha, with reverence, spoke,
Seeking marvels, powers that a monk invoked.

“Lord,” said he, “Nalanda thrives, prosperous
and bright,
Confidence in you, a beacon of light.
Appoint a monk, miracles to weave,
That faith may blossom, the people believe.”

The Buddha, in wisdom, replied with care,
“I teach not through wonders, a spectacle
rare.”
Thrice asked, thrice denied, this mystical
plea,
For true enlightenment, the path is key.

Three realms of powers, supernormal might,
In actions, they shimmer, in the mystic's flight.
To appear as many, through walls to pass,
Such feats of magic, a fleeting, hollow mass.

To read the minds, a power profound,
To guide the souls, wisdom unbound.
Yet, the third, a miracle true,
To liberate minds, suffering undo.

Perform not wonders for the world's mere gaze,
But miracles noble, that suffering lays.
When passion binds, and cravings persist,
Guide them to freedom, the heart's truest tryst.

When hatred burns, anger's fierce blaze,
Tame the flames, with wisdom's rays.
And for the ignorant, veiled in dark,
Unveil the truths, the ego's spark.

Teaching Kevaddha, wisdom's decree,
Miracles true, for souls to be free.
Not for the spectacle, the ego's delight,
But to shatter ignorance, and awaken the light.

In Vinaya rules, the monks were told,
Not for showmanship, the miracles unfold.
Pindola Bharadwaja, with powers renowned,
A challenge accepted, a spectacle crowned.

A bowl aloft, in the lofty air,
A rich man's challenge, a mystic affair.
Pindola ascended, the bowl to reclaim,
Proving the sacred, the world to acclaim.

Yet, the Buddha, displeased, called him near,

A lesson to teach, for all to revere.
The bowl in pieces, before the throng,
Miracles for truth, not for the ego, belong.

27. The Buddha's Last Illness

In Beluva's grove, midst the rainy season's stay,
The Buddha, afflicted, in sickness did sway.
Yet mindful and poised, he bore the pains dire,
No murmur escaped from the enlightened seer.

"I shall not pass without words, a parting decree,
To disciples, to order, my wisdom to be.
With a will strong and fierce, this ailment I'll quell,
Suppress the sickness, by my effort, dispel."

Recovering slowly, from the monastery's door,
The Buddha emerged, weary but with teachings galore.
Ananda, devoted, by his side did stand,
Witness to the Master's compassionate command.

"Ananda, the time is nigh, my journey nears its end,
Dharma shall be your island, my dear, trusted friend.
Hold no other refuge, no sanctuary but this,
In the Dharma's embrace, find eternal bliss."

Old and feeble, yet the Buddha's resolve stood,
To teach the Dharma, for the highest good.

Alms rounds continued, each lesson a gem,
A sage in frailty, yet a towering diadem.

To Vesali's streets, one morning he trod,
Bowl in hand, the symbol of the mendicant god.
Ananda, attentive, stood by his side,
Awaiting the words from the sage's guide.

"Take a mat, Ananda, to Capala, we'll go,
In its sacred embrace, our wisdom will flow."
Seated on the mat, Buddha began to share,
The essence of Dharma, in the quietude's air.

"The Four Means of Accomplishment, by practice well-honed,
Lengthens one's life, in the world's grand zone.
I've mastered these means, my journey nears its close,
In wisdom's embrace, the eternal truth it shows."

Yet Ananda puzzled, the meaning unclear,
To request or not, his mind held in fear.
The Buddha, understanding, bade him away,
To ponder the message under the tree's gentle sway.

Contemplating the mission, the Buddha's grand quest,
To awaken the world, in Dharma's bequest.
Years of teachings, now echoed in the breeze,
The Buddha reflected, beneath the sacred trees.

Three months, the decree, his time to depart,
Ananda, awakened, with a heavy heart.
Diligent, mindful, the Buddha implored,

"Work out your salvation, let truth be adored."

In Vesali's Hall, with a pointed roof,
The Buddha addressed, each disciple's reproof.
"Diligently practice, the teachings I've shared,
In three months, I'll leave, my mission declared."

Grief cloaked the assembly, a somber embrace,
Yet Dhammarama, absent, a singular case.
Summoned by Buddha, his absence explained,
To attain arahantship, his goal remained.

"Follow Dhammarama, his heart pure and true,
Honoring me best, by the Dharma they pursue."
The disciples learned, in silence profound,
The path of the Dharma, as the Buddha expound.

28. The Last Days of the Buddha

In the twilight of his days, the Buddha's resolve,
To Kusinaga's haven, a journey to evolve.
His eightieth year, marked by wisdom's glow,
A path through time, with Ananda in tow.

Through Rajagaha's streets, the pilgrimage unfurls,
Footsteps of the enlightened, traversing the worlds.
Not the bustling cities, nor the grand and grandiose,
A humble abode for his journey's close.

Amidst disciples gathered, a radiant band,
The Buddha walked, the Enlightened, grand.
His body, aged, felt the touch of time,
Yet within, a diamond, forever sublime.

Cities and villages, witnesses on his trail,
A journey through realms, an ethereal sail.
Rahula and Yasodhara, shadows of the past,
Moggallana and Sariputta, their tenure cast.

In the tapestry of teachings, the Buddha wove,
Guidance for monks, a legacy to behove.
Seven factors of enlightenment, a beacon
bright,
Illustrious truths, in the dawning light.

Vinaya and sutras, the Buddha's decree,
A litmus for truths, in the vast Dharma sea.
Discern the path, in the forest of thought,
A roadmap to wisdom, by the Buddha sought.

At each pause in the journey, his voice did
ring,
A sermon repeated, like a hymn to spring.
The Noble Eightfold Path, its threefold
embrace,
Morality, concentration, wisdom's grace.

"Follow," he urged, "the righteous way,
The fruits it bears, dispel the dark array.
Morality, a fortress against the tide,
Concentration, a lens where truths abide.

Wisdom, the beacon, in the darkened night,
Dispelling illusions, revealing the light.
These three, in harmony, pave the way,
To end all sorrows, let wisdom hold sway."

As the journey unfolded, whispers in the
breeze,
The Buddha's teachings, carried by the trees.
His silhouette against the setting sun,
A sage on a quest, his earthly run.

In Kusinaga's embrace, his final abode,
A haven of tranquility, where rivers flowed.
The last chapter, in an illustrious book,
The Buddha's journey, a final look.

In the autumn of his life, he imparted the
lore,
To disciples and monks who sought evermore.
In Kusinaga's shadow, the Buddha found rest,
His teachings echoing, a legacy blest.

29. The Buddha's Last Meal

To Pava's village, a humble call to dine,
Cunda, the goldsmith's son, the host benign.
"Sukaramaddava," a feast so rare,
Mushrooms or boar's delight, whispers in the
air.

The Buddha's counsel, a specific plea,
Served only the dish, from doubts set free.
The rest for the monks, a shared repast,
A feast prepared, in reverence cast.

Cunda, attentive, heeded the sage's word,
As the meal commenced, and offerings stirred.
The Buddha spoke of Dharma's profound truth,
As sukaramaddava adorned the sooth.

Post-feast discourse, gratitude bestowed,
The Buddha's praise for the path they rode.
Yet, a shadow loomed, a familiar ache,

Dysentery's grip, the body it did shake.

Enduring the pain, a resilient feat,
A journey ahead, no time to retreat.
Kusinaga called, six miles away,
The Buddha, weakened, in silent dismay.

Through struggles and pain, the Buddha strove,
To the grove of sala trees, his final alcove.
Bathing in Kakuttha's tranquil stream,
A respite sought, in the Buddha's dream.

He foresaw the whispers, the doubts that brew,
In Cunda's heart, the regret to strew.
"Bury the remnants," the Buddha did insist,
A profound act, a karmic twist.

Ananda, faithful, by the Buddha's side,
Witnessed the pain, no respite to hide.
A couch prepared, 'neath sala's bloom,
The Buddha, fatigued, in nature's room.

Petals cascaded, a celestial grace,
Sala trees weeping, an otherworldly embrace.
Yet the Buddha spoke, with wisdom profound,
Not flowers, but deeds, his respect unbound.

As blossoms fell, the Buddha declared,
True reverence lies, not in petals shared.
Monks, nuns, and lay followers sincere,
In Dharma's path, the homage clear.

Ananda, moved, sought a moment's space,
In a hut he wept, his heart's embrace.
"I am a learner," Ananda sighed,
The Master departing, his eyes belied.

The Buddha summoned, his words so kind,
"Cease your tears, Ananda, let them not bind.

Separation is woven in life's fleeting thread,
All that begins, in time, is shed.

"Your kindness immense, a merit gained,
Release is near, your weaknesses waned.
An arahant, soon you shall be,
In time, from human bonds set free.

"Go now, Ananda, into Kusinaga's fold,
Declare my nearing parinirvana, truth be told.
Bid the people come, in the midnight's last hour,
Witness the Buddha's transcendent power."

Ananda, accompanied by a fellow monk,
Spread the tidings, the Buddha's final funk.
Kusinaga, grief-stricken, gathered near,
A town in mourning, a farewell sincere.

Family by family, bowed low with grace,
To the Buddha, reverence traced.
Kusinaga now a sacred ground,
In parinirvana, the Buddha found.

Four sacred sites, the faithful yearn to see,
Birth, enlightenment, teachings, and final liberty.
Kusinaga, the last on this revered list,
Where the Buddha's earthly sojourn kissed.

30. Subhadda, The Last Disciple

Near Kusinaga's shade, where sala trees entwine,
A wandering ascetic sought the sage divine.
Subhadda, in quest of answers profound,

With doubts in his heart, approached the sacred ground.

To Ananda he pled, "Let me see the Seer,
The Buddha, wise, in whom truth is clear."
Ananda hesitated, "He's weary, restive, and frail,
Disturb him not, let his strength prevail."

Yet Buddha, attuned to the seeker's plea,
Called Ananda forth, his words decree,
"Let Subhadda approach, his thirst for truth sincere,
In his quest for knowledge, let him draw near."

Subhadda, respectful, approached the sage,
In the sala grove, wisdom to engage.
He questioned the Buddha, inquisitive mind,
About doctrines diverse, seeking to find.

"O Gotama, teachers myriad proclaim,
Truths diverse, each their path's own name.
Have all, as they claim, found the truth's core,
Or do some wander, truth to explore?"

Buddha, serene, his response unfurled,
"In teachings bereft of the Eightfold, truth's pearl,
No sotapanna, anagami reside,
Only in this path, truths fully abide.

"In my doctrine, O Subhadda, lies,
The Noble Eightfold, the path to the skies.
Sotapanna, sakadagami, arahant's grace,
In this sacred teaching, find their place.

"In the realm of others, uncharted terrain,

No saints, no sages, their doctrines constrain.
Follow my precepts, disciples dear,
The world, with arahants, shall never veer."

Subhadda, convinced, sought refuge profound,
The order of monks, in truth, he found.
The Buddha's last disciple, in quiet reprieve,
As Kondanna was first, now Subhadda believes.

With diligence and ardor, Subhadda embraced,
The teachings profound, in wisdom encased.
In swift fervor, an arahant he became,
Buddha's final disciple, truth he reclaimed.

31. The Buddha's Last Words

In Kusinaga's tranquil shade, where sala blossoms fall,
The Buddha, serene, addressed disciples, one and all.
Subhadda, in quest of truth, sought the sage's grace,
Ananda, cautious, hesitated, yet Subhadda found his place.

"Let Subhadda draw near," Buddha's voice declared,
"His quest for knowledge, let it be shared."
Ananda, obedient, permitted the inquirer's plea,
To the sage's presence, Subhadda made his way, full of glee.

"O Gotama," Subhadda queried with a seeking heart,
"Do other teachers hold truths, or is yours set apart?

Have they all, as they claim, found
enlightenment's core,
Or do some wander, seeking truth evermore?"

Buddha, in calm wisdom, his response unfurled,
"In teachings devoid of the Noble Path,
truth's pearl,
No sotapanna, anagami finds abode,
Only in this Eightfold Path, truth is
bestowed.

"In my doctrine alone, O Subhadda, behold,
The Eightfold Path, where truths are extolled.
Sotapanna, sakadagami, arahant's grace,
In this sacred teaching, find their sacred
place.

"In realms of others, uncharted and unknown,
No saints, no sages, in doctrines they own.
Follow my precepts, disciples dear,
The world, with arahants, shall never veer."

Subhadda, convinced, sought refuge profound,
Into the order of monks, in truth, he was
bound.
The Buddha's last disciple, in quiet reprieve,
As Kondanna was first, Subhadda now believes.

With diligence and ardor, Subhadda embraced,
The teachings profound, in wisdom encased.
In swift fervor, an arahant he became,
Buddha's final disciple, truth he reclaimed.

Yet, in the gathering, a poignant truth was
told,
Some may falter, in the Teacher's absence
bold.
"Without the Buddha, who shall guide our
quest?"

Ananda wondered, concern etched on his chest.

Buddha, prescient, addressed Ananda's fear,
"Whatever I've taught, let it be your seer.
The doctrine, the discipline, by me revealed,
Your eternal guide, when from this world I'm
peeled."

Silence draped the assembly, questions none
declared,
The monks, in reverence, their doubts bared.
Ananda marveled, "None harbors a doubt or
fear,
The Buddha's wisdom, in their hearts, is
clear."

Buddha, aware, affirmed Ananda's claim,
"Not a single doubt, not a whisper of shame.
The most backward, a sotapanna, you'll find,
Destined for enlightenment, in their hearts
enshrined."

With certainty, Buddha addressed his kin,
"Behold, my last counsel, let it sink in.
All things in the world, they ebb and they
flow,
Work diligently for salvation, let wisdom's
river flow."

Into jhana stages, the Buddha did delve,
Meditative absorptions, realms beyond oneself.
Deeper and deeper, he traversed with ease,
A final descent into nirvana, a tranquil
release.

Vesak's full moon witnessed the sage's grand
finale,
In 543 BC, on this sacred valley.
The Buddha's passing, nirvana's embrace,

A timeless departure, in the moon's gentle grace.

32. The First Buddhist Council

In the wake of the Buddha's departure,
A monk's peculiar joy, a discordant capture.
"He who troubled us with rules austere,
Now sleeps in peace, shedding no more tear."

These words, unsettling, the Venerable Kassapa heard,
Prompting concern for the sacred word.
To protect the teachings from time's relentless drift,
A council convened, an urgent uplift.

King Ajatasattu, regal and wise,
Facilitated the monks' solemn ties.
At Sattapanni Cave's entrance, they'd meet,
To safeguard the Dharma, a task replete.

Five hundred seats, an assembly grand,
For arahants renowned, a sacred band.
Yet, a lone chair, void of its guest,
Reserved for Ananda, still on the quest.

Ananda, learner, not yet wholly free,
Felt the weight of his incompleteness keenly.
"The council approaches, my heart must strive,
To attain arahantship, and truly arrive."

Through the night, he tread the path of contemplation,
A meditation profound, a purification.

As dawn approached, defilements took their leave,
Arahant Ananda, doubts bereave.

Three months post the sage's final breath,
In Rajagaha's cave, the council met.
Maha Kassapa, solemn and wise,
Presided over truth, under heaven's eyes.

Upali, sage in Vinaya's decree,
Guardian of rules, a monastic key.
Ananda, the repository of the Buddha's speech,
A living vessel, wisdom's reach.

Together they wove the fabric of lore,
Oral tradition, teachings to adore.
No written scrolls, no ink-stained page,
But minds attuned to the Buddha's sage.

In the heart of Buddhism's infancy,
The Pali Tipitaka's genesis, a legacy.
Ananda recited, the Dharma unfurled,
Preserving wisdom, for a seeking world.

Through question and answer, the council's might,
A tapestry woven in the silent night.
The First Council, an epochal feat,
A legacy birthed, the Dharma replete.

Centuries later, in Sri Lanka's embrace,
A monarch's reverence, a sacred space.
Vāṭa Gamani Abhaya, a pious king,
Preserving the Tipitaka, an eternal spring.

On ola leaves, the script was traced,
Inscribed with care, not to be effaced.
The written word, a sacred rebirth,
Preserving the Dharma, encased in earth.

Afterword

Dear Beloved Reader,

As you turn the final pages of "Samsara's Symphony: Epic Echoes of the Buddha," my heart swells with gratitude and joy. Thank you for embarking on this poetic journey through the life of the Buddha with me. Your presence here, engaging with the verses that unfurled from my pen, is a treasure I hold dear.

Reflecting on the moments we've shared within these pages, I'm filled with a profound sense of connection. Together, we traversed the sacred grounds of Lumbini, where the Buddha's journey began, and ventured into the heart of his spiritual awakening beneath the Bodhi tree. In the verses that carried us through the cosmic battle with Mara, the teachings imparted in the Deer Park at Sarnath, and the poignant farewell at Kusinaga, we experienced the transformative cadence of Siddhartha's life.

The symphony began with the resonant notes of "Awakening's Prelude," where the young prince, ensconced in palace luxury, first felt the echoes of human suffering. The narrative threads wove through "The Departure," capturing the poignant moment when Siddhartha chose the path of renunciation, leaving behind the comforts of his royal birthright. In "Bodhi's Embrace," the verses unfolded like the petals of the sacred fig tree, encapsulating the intensity of Siddhartha's meditation leading to enlightenment.

Did you feel the weight of Mara's presence in "Cosmic Confrontation," the celestial struggle mirrored in the realms of the mind? The verses sought to illuminate the battle waged within, where doubt, desire, and distraction sought to shroud the Buddha's awakening. In "Sarnath's Sermon," the Deer Park witnessed the birth of a new era, as the Buddha expounded the Four Noble Truths and the Eightfold Path, laying the foundation for a compassionate philosophy that resonates through time.

The journey continued through "Beluva's Brevity," where the Buddha, despite the frailty of his body, continued to share the Dharma with his disciples. The poignant encounter with Subhadda in "Subhadda's Quest" revealed the universality of seeking truth and the boundless compassion of the Buddha, even in his final moments.

In "Nirvana's Whisper," the verses sought to capture the ineffable as the Buddha passed into final liberation. The sala trees, adorned with blossoms, bowed in silent reverence, reflecting the profundity of the moment. The symphony reached its crescendo in "Epic Enlightenment," where the poetic narrative echoed the realization of arahantship by Venerable Ananda, a fitting closure to the tale.

As you linger on these final pages, I hope the verses resonate within you, lingering like the haunting melody of a cherished symphony. The beauty of narrative epic poetry lies in its ability to transcend the boundaries of time, offering a timeless vessel for the profound teachings of the Buddha. It has been my

sincere endeavor to infuse these verses with the spirit of the great literary traditions, creating a tapestry that mirrors the depth of the Buddha's enlightenment.

Your presence on this poetic pilgrimage has been a source of inspiration, and I genuinely hope that the verses you've encountered within "Samsara's Symphony" have kindled the flame of introspection and contemplation. May the wisdom embedded in these pages serve as a lantern, guiding you on your own quest for truth and enlightenment.

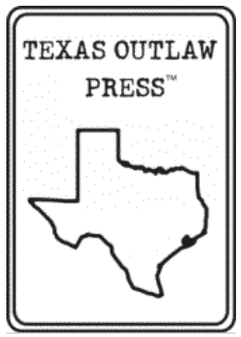
As you step away from this poetic odyssey, may the echoes of the Buddha's teachings linger in your heart, prompting moments of introspection and awakening. May you find solace, inspiration, and guidance within the verses, much like the disciples who sought the Buddha's wisdom in times of uncertainty.

I bid you farewell with a deep sense of gratitude and anticipation. Until the next time our paths cross, may your journey be adorned with the blossoms of enlightenment, and may the symphony of your own quest be harmonious and profound.

With warm regards and heartfelt gratitude,

-Jeff Callaway

Jeff Callaway, a native Texan, is a prolific writer renowned for his compelling storytelling and captivating poetry. With an extensive repertoire of published works, including many books and chapbooks, he has established himself as a distinguished literary voice. From his early beginnings performing at open mic events to his notable art exhibition at the esteemed Hal Samples Space Gallery in Deep Ellum, Jeff's artistic journey has been a testament to his talent and dedication. "Samsara's Symphony - Epic Echoes of the Buddha" continues his triumphant return to the realm of theology, highlighting his ability to transport readers into richly imagined worlds. Currently based in New York, Texas, Jeff continues to inspire through his writing, painting, and unwavering pursuit of artistic expression.



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2023

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